

that we support when they run and work hard—and keep in mind, my campaigns are over now, so I'm doing this on behalf of them—that we know that they can spend an appropriate amount of time going out and raising funds and listening to people and hearing out the concerns of people in their districts, their States, and their nations, but that it won't take all their time and it won't take all your time. Besides that, it won't cost you as much money. [Laughter] But the main thing is, it will be better for our country.

So if there's one group of people I would like to see in the forefront of advocating a reasonable bipartisan campaign finance reform, it is the contributors of the Democratic Party, the Democratic Committee, the Democratic Senatorial Committee, the Democratic House Committee, the people that helped me become President. So I ask you, please help me do that and give our own Members the courage they need to demand that our friends on the other side join us and do this. We need to just put this behind us.

The system was created in '74. It worked fine for us for a while. It's been overtaken by events. You understand it better than anybody else. You're on the receiving end of it. Help me pass campaign finance reform this year. I need your help, and I want you to do it.

The other thing I want to tell you is this: We have a chance this year to pass a balanced budget, to do some things in welfare reform that will really prove that we're not just being tough and talking and saying, people who can work, must work, but to actually give people a chance to work and to get an education. We have a chance to expand our trade networks, particularly in Latin America and Asia, in ways we never have before. The First Lady and our

daughter are about to go to Africa on a sweeping trip there.

We have a chance to pass significant improvements in health care for children. We have a chance to do a number of things in foreign affairs to make the world safer. We have a chance to deal with the entitlements problem for the next generation. All of this can be done this year.

It can only be done if I can maintain an atmosphere of both openness to members of the Republican Party who want to work with us and if the Democrats know that we are proceeding with conviction to prepare this country for the next century consistent with what we pledged to do in the election.

And what I want to ask you to do is to continue to give me your support in a constructive way. When we deal with these issues, if you have some suggestion, let me know. If you can mobilize support, do it. But just remember, every day is a day we're moving closer to a new century and a new millennium, and if we do our job, we will open the greatest period in American history. If we fail to do our job, our children and grandchildren should never forgive us. And if something happens that we don't do it in Washington, we ought to make sure it is not the responsibility of our Democrats in the Senate or the House or the White House.

Every day we get up and go to work there to try to make this country a better place. Ultimately, when you get right down to the bottom line, that is what you have supported and what I promise you you will continue to support. And I want you always to be proud of it and always to believe in it.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 p.m. at the residence of Shelby and Katherine Bryan.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Juvenile Crime in Boston, Massachusetts

February 19, 1997

The President. Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor, and let me thank all the panelists who are here and all of those who are in the audience, people who represent law enforcement

groups around America, people who represent the families who have suffered loss.

We are here today for a simple reason: Boston proves that we can take the streets back of our

country from juvenile violence and crime, from murder, from lost lives; that we can give our children back their childhood and we can give our streets and our neighborhoods back to the families who live on them.

And what we are trying to do in Washington, what I am determined to do in this legislative session, is to take the lessons learned and the triumphs achieved here in Boston and the progress made and embody it in a legislative proposal that the Attorney General has worked very hard with me on to try to give other communities the chance to do what you have done here. It's not a very complicated strategy, but it's the most sensible one we can follow.

Between 1990 and 1995, juvenile homicides dropped by 80 percent in the city of Boston. Since July of 1995, not a single child under 16 has been killed by a gun in this city. Our anti-gang and youth violence strategy essentially rests on four elements, all of which can be found in what has been done here: first, targeting violent gangs and juveniles with more prosecutors and tougher laws; second, working to make our children gun-free and drug-free; third, streamlining and reforming our juvenile justice system; and fourth, giving our young people something to say yes to, not just looking for ways to punish those who have done wrong but to give kids a chance to make some positive steps and actually have a little constructive fun in their lives. I've seen that here in Boston, too.

I have a lot to be grateful to the mayor for, but one of the things that I'm especially grateful for is that he gave me a chance early on in his term to sit and meet with his youth council, the young people that have advised him and worked with him, along with Sister Jean, who has been to Washington to help us out a couple of times.

And I have seen the remarkable balance of your program; I'm excited about it. I also know that for this to succeed nationwide everyone has a part to play. We can pass laws in Washington, we can be supportive at the Federal level, but we have to have the support of grassroots citizens, of business leaders, religious leaders, as well as those in law enforcement and parents and obviously the political leaders here.

So, Mr. Mayor, I'm glad to be here. Governor, Senator, Congressmen, thank you all for having us here, and I think I'd like to let you go on with the program now and listen.

[At this point, the discussion began.]

The President. If I could just say very briefly, in support of not only what the Justice Department has done, but also we have Ray Kelly here who's our Under Secretary of the Treasury for Enforcement: We do recognize that one of our important roles nationally—and I want to thank all the Members of the Senate and the House that are here for their support—is to do what we can to at least disarm people who should not have guns.

And I think the Brady bill has helped, the assault weapons bill has helped, the work the Treasury has done to try to be more disciplined in who can be federally licensed to sell guns has helped. There are fewer than half the number of people licensed to sell guns today than there were 4 years ago, fewer than half. And I thank you for that, for your efforts there.

And in this bill we have two other things: We extend the provisions of the Brady bill to violent juvenile offenders, and we require some sort of trigger or gun lock mechanism to be on guns that are in the reach of children. I think that's very important. I thank you for what you're doing.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. Thank you very much, Mayor. I don't think we can possibly minimize the role that you have played in all this, the impetus you gave to everybody else. You are someone who is as gifted as anyone I've ever known at bringing people together and making people feel comfortable, when they're from different walks of life, in the same room together working on the same thing. I think the enormous trust the people of this city have in you is one of the reasons this has happened. And I thank you for that.

Let me also say just briefly, in closing, two points. Number one, when I asked Janet Reno to become Attorney General, I knew that I was—that we were together taking a chance, because I had been a State attorney general and a Governor, dealing with crime problems—Governor of a small State dealing with crime problems on a community basis. And she had been a prosecuting attorney in a very large and a very complicated county, with enormous and very challenging problems. But neither one of us had ever dealt with the Federal system except on the other end of it.

I did it because we believed together that the only way we would ever get the crime rate going back down and start saving children's lives and giving people the confidence they need to deal with all the other challenges—the economic, the educational, the other challenges we face—is if the lessons that were being manifested at the community level in America could somehow sweep the country and be reflected in national policy.

When I became President and I discovered that Senator Biden, then the Chairman of the Senate committee that had control of this legislation, believed the same thing, we fated a lot of heat and became vulnerable to a lot of very—what was in the short run quite effective political rhetoric, you know, we were trying to take everybody's guns away and throwing money at these problems and all that. But you see, now, 4 years later, we know the truth, that what we have tried to do is simply give more people like Mayor Menino and Probation Officer Brooks and Commissioner Evans and Captain Dunford and all the others a chance to succeed all over America. That's what we've tried to do.

It is a very simple strategy, but it will work. It will work. And today the juvenile program I'm going to announce is basically an attempt to take what you have proved works here and give those tools to every community in the Nation to follow. Let me just say, no disrespect to anybody else, but you know the people I listened most closely to today were Terry and Lanita because they're going to be around here long after I'm gone.

And what we have to do, the rest of us, is to construct a system that works for them and that works for parents like the Cherys, who lost a child because of the failures of America and who have spent their lives now trying to make sure it doesn't happen to anybody else. So this is a huge deal.

There was a report—I will just close with this—there was a report that was issued a few

weeks ago by the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, saying that 75 percent of all the teenagers who lose their lives, who are murdered, in the entire industrial world are murdered in America—75 percent. Now, that hasn't happened in Boston in over a year and a half. If it doesn't happen in Boston, it doesn't have to happen anyplace else. We can turn this around.

America now knows we can bring the crime rate down. Now America has to learn that we can save our children and that we do not have to put up with this and that the only way to solve it is the way you have solved it, but that we have a job in Washington to create the conditions and give you the tools which will make it possible for you to solve it. That's what we're trying to do. But let's not forget what the stakes are.

You know, I've spent a lot of time—we had a big telecommunications trade agreement that we finished last weekend which will create a million new jobs in America over the next 12 years. I want every child in Boston to be alive to have a chance to get one of those jobs.

Let's do first things first. Let's get this done, and let's remember that what we're really trying to do is make what you've done here possible for children in communities all across America.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:19 a.m. in the McCormack Building. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Thomas Menino of Boston; Sister Jean Gribaudo, the mayor's youth adviser; Gov. William Weld of Massachusetts; Tanya Brooks, Suffolk County Superior Court probation officer; Paul Evans, Boston police commissioner; Robert P. Dunford, Boston area C-11 police district captain; Terry Thompson and Lanita Tolentino, members of the Mayor's Youth Council; and Joseph and Tina Chery, whose son was a victim of gang crossfire in 1993. The release also included remarks by Attorney General Janet Reno.

Remarks at the University of Massachusetts in Boston February 19, 1997

Thank you. Mr. Mayor; Commissioner Evans; Probation Officer Tanya Brooks; President

Bulger; Chancellor Sherry Penney; Governor Weld; Senator Kerry; Congressman Moakley;