

people. And I am not against tougher penalties; we have toughened a lot of penalties since I have been President. But to pretend that you can do that and not guarantee the police, the prosecutors, the probation officers, and the prevention programs and expect to have results is simply wrong. You work in this area, and you know it. So let's go back to the Congress and get a bill that will give you the tools to give our children their futures back and our people their neighborhoods and their streets back. We can do it together.

Let me just say something about one specific problem. The illegal guns that youth gangs use do not just come out of thin air. They are bought and sold, traded and given in trade, just like any other guns. And all too often, it is adults who are making the transfer. So today, I'm directing the Secretary of the Treasury, Bob Rubin, to require all federally licensed gun dealers to post signs in their stores and issue written warnings with each gun they sell to put adult gun purchasers on clear and unambiguous notice that selling or giving a handgun to a minor is dangerous, it is wrong, but it is also against the law, and it is a felony so serious that it can carry a penalty of up to 10 years in prison. I want every adult who buys a gun to see that sign and think about it before they give a child a gun that could wind up in gang violence.

In the last 4 years, we have proven that if we work together and learn from each other, we can begin to turn the tide and win the war, as Ray Kelly said. Now we have an opportunity that is real and genuine to build on that progress. Your presence here, your enthusiasm, and what I know about the work you have done back home give me great hope that we can give our children a safe and orderly environment where they can make the most of their lives.

We know that a lot of this will have to be done at the community level. When we did the Summit of Service that the Presidents sponsored in Philadelphia, one of the five things we said we wanted for our children was a safe environment for every child in America to grow up in. And we know that a lot of that has to be done by you. But we also know that we at the national level have our responsibility, too. And our responsibility now is to continue to implement the crime bill and put the community police officers out there, to be faithful in our enforcement of all the Federal laws that we can, and to deal with the special problems of guns and to pass a smart, balanced juvenile justice crime bill that does more than talk tough.

I pledge to work with Congress of both parties to pass such a bill. I look forward to working with all of you to get the job done, but I say again: The most powerful argument for doing it is the experience you have already had, the successes you have already achieved, the lives you have already saved.

When you know what works and you do it and you see children's lives reclaimed, it becomes unconscionable not to do more. I am determined that we will do more and that we will win this incredibly important struggle.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:09 p.m. in Salon H of the Conference Center at Georgetown University. In his remarks, he referred to Under Secretary of the Treasury for Enforcement Raymond W. Kelly; Father Leo O'Donovan, president, Georgetown University; Sarah Brady, chair, Handgun Control, Inc., and her husband, former White House Press Secretary James S. Brady; and Mayor Bob Lanier of Houston, TX.

Memorandum on Enforcing the Youth Handgun Safety Act

June 11, 1997

Memorandum for the Secretary of the Treasury

Subject: Enforcing the Youth Handgun Safety Act

A major problem in our Nation today is the terrifying ease with which our young people gain illegal or unattended access to guns. Firearms

are now responsible for 12 percent of fatalities among all American children and teenagers. Criminal use of firearms by young people is a national tragedy. Between 1984 and 1994, the number of juvenile offenders committing homicides by firearms nearly quadrupled. Moreover,

firearms are the fourth leading cause of accidental deaths among children ages 5 to 14 and are now the primary method by which young people commit suicide. A recent study supported by the Department of Justice found that slightly more than half of all privately owned firearms were stored unlocked and approximately one-third of all handguns were stored both loaded and unlocked. We must do all we can to prevent both illegal and unintended access to guns by juveniles.

To address this issue, my Administration has consistently called for toughening our laws to help reduce youth gun violence. Specifically, we have fought for and gained passage of: (1) the Brady Law, to allow local law enforcement to conduct background checks before handguns are sold; (2) the Assault Weapons ban, to keep deadly assault weapons off the streets; (3) the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, to establish a policy of "zero tolerance" for guns in our schools; and (4) the Youth Handgun Safety Act, Subtitle B of the 1994 Crime Bill, to prohibit, in most circumstances, the transfer to or possession of a handgun by a juvenile.

More recently, we proposed comprehensive juvenile crime legislation that, among other things, would continue to crack down on youth gun violence by increasing penalties for transferring a firearm to a juvenile, prohibiting violent juveniles from owning firearms as adults, and requiring Federal firearms licensees (FFLs) to provide a child safety lock with every gun sold. I hope the Congress will enact these important measures as soon as possible.

Until the Congress acts, however, there is more we can do to keep handguns out of the hands of our Nation's youth. Existing law already

bans the transfer of handguns to minors and juvenile possession of handguns, except in specified circumstances, and grants the Department of the Treasury authority to prescribe rules and regulations to implement this provision. I direct you to take the authorized steps necessary to enforce the provisions of the Youth Handgun Safety Act—and specifically, consistent with your statutory authority, to promptly publish in the *Federal Register* proposed regulations requiring that signs be posted on the premises of FFLs and that written notification be issued with each handgun sold to non-licensees warning that:

- (1) Federal law prohibits, except in certain limited circumstances, anyone under the age of 18 from knowingly possessing a handgun, or any adult from transferring a handgun to such a minor;
- (2) violation of the prohibition of transferring a handgun to a minor is, under certain circumstances, punishable by up to 10 years in prison;
- (3) handguns are a leading contributor to juvenile violence and fatalities; and
- (4) safely storing and locking handguns away from children can help ensure compliance with Federal law.

I also direct you to provide me with a written status report within 60 days on how you will carry out this directive.

Your implementation of this directive will help inform gun purchasers about their responsibility under Federal law to keep handguns from our children. It will also ensure that gun purchasers are warned about the frequency with which handguns kill or injure our kids.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner June 11, 1997

Thank you very much. Let me say to all of you how very grateful I am for your presence and for your support. I appreciate what the Vice President has said, and I associate myself with his remarks. I think that's what they say in the Congress. *[Laughter]*

I would just like to make two very brief points. First of all, the country is in better shape

than it was 4½ years ago. It is a direct consequence, in my view, of the hard work of the American people combined with the policies and the changes which have been instituted here.

I want you to know that my plan is to keep working on this until the last day I'm in office. And as far as I'm concerned, all these good