

We had a comprehensive plan: to put 100,000 new community police officers on the street and tough new penalties on the books; to steer young people away from crime, gangs, and drugs; and to keep guns out of the hands of criminals with the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill.

Today we learned that the first full year of our crime bill produced the largest drop in violent crime in 22 years. Earlier this year we learned that the Brady bill has already stopped 186,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers from purchasing handguns.

Our plan is working. Now we must press forward. Fighting the scourge of juvenile crime and violence is my top law enforcement priority

for the next 4 years. In February I submitted my Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Strategy to Congress. This bill declares war on gangs, with new prosecutors and tougher penalties; extends the Brady bill so violent teenage criminals will never have the right to purchase a handgun; and provides resources to keep schools open late, on weekends, and in the summer, so young people have something to say yes to.

I am hopeful that Congress will pass it without delay. We must keep the crime rate coming down and every child's prospect of a bright future going up.

NOTE: This statement was embargoed for release until 4:30 p.m. on April 13.

## Remarks on the Apparel Industry Partnership *April 14, 1997*

Thank you very much. I would like to begin, first of all, by thanking all the members of this partnership, the cochairs, Paul Charron of Liz Claiborne and Linda Golodner of the National Consumers League, Jay Mazur of UNITE. I thank Kathie Lee Gifford, who has done so much to bring public attention to this issue. I thank the Members of Congress who are here: Congressman George Miller, Congressman Bernie Sanders, Congressman Lane Evans, Congressman Marty Martinez, and especially I thank my good friend Senator Tom Harkin, who first brought this issue to my attention a long time ago. Thank you very much, sir, and thank all of you for your passionate concern. I thank the former Secretary of Labor, Bob Reich, and Acting Secretary Cynthia Metzler and Secretary-designate Alexis Herman, who is here. And I thank Maria Echaveste and Gene Sperling for their work.

The announcement we make today will improve the lives of millions of garment workers around the world. As has now been painfully well documented, some of the clothes and shoes we buy here in America are manufactured under working conditions which are deplorable and unacceptable—mostly overseas, but unbelievably, sometimes here at home as well.

In our system of enterprise, which I have done my best to promote and advance, we sup-

port the proposition that businesses are in business to make a profit. But in our society, which we believe to be good and want to be better, we know that human rights and labor rights must be a part of the basic framework within which all businesses honorably compete.

As important as the fabric apparel workers make for us is the fabric of their lives, which is a part of the fabric of our lives, here at home and around the world. Their health and their safety, their ability to make a decent wage, their ability to bring children into this world and raise them with dignity and have their children see their parents working with dignity, that's an important part of the quality of our lives and will have a lot to do with the quality of our children's future.

Last August, when the Vice President and I brought together the leaders of some of our Nation's largest apparel and footwear companies and representatives of labor, consumer, human rights, and religious groups, I was genuinely moved at the shared outrage at sweatshop abuses and the shared determination to do something about it. That led to this apparel industry partnership. This partnership has reached an agreement—as already has been said—that will significantly reduce the use of sweatshop labor over the long run. It will give American

consumers greater confidence in the products they buy.

And again, I say they have done a remarkable thing. Paul Charron said it was just the beginning because even though there are some very impressive and big companies represented on this stage, there are some which are not. But I would like to ask all the members of the partnership here to stand, and I think we ought to express our appreciation to them for what they have done. [Applause]

Now, here's what they agreed to do: first, a workplace code of conduct that companies will voluntarily adopt, and require their contractors to adopt, to dramatically improve the conditions under which goods are made. The code will establish a maximum workweek, a cap of 12 hours on the amount of overtime a company can require; require that employers pay at least the minimum or prevailing wage, respect basic labor rights. It will require safe and healthy working conditions and freedom from abuse and harassment. Most important, it will crack down on child labor, prohibiting the employment of those under 15 years of age in most countries.

It will also take steps to ensure that this code is enforced and that American consumers will know that the tenets of the agreement are being honored. The apparel industry has developed new standards for internal and external monitoring to make sure companies and contractors live up to that code of conduct. It will also form an independent association to help implement the agreement and to develop an effective way to share this information with consumers, such as labels on clothing, seals of approval in advertising, or signs in stores to guarantee that no sweatshop labor was used on a given product line.

Of course, the agreement is just the beginning. We know sweatshop labor will not vanish overnight. We know that while this agreement is an historic step, our real measure of progress must be in the changed and improved lives and livelihoods of apparel workers here at home and around the world. That is why we need more companies to join this crusade and follow its strict rules of conduct.

One of the association's most important tasks will be to expand participation to as many large

and small companies as possible. And I urge all of America's apparel companies to become part of this effort. If these people are willing to put their names, their necks, their reputations, and their bottom lines on the bottom line of America, every other company in America in their line of work ought to be willing to do the very same thing.

We have spent a lot of time trying to find jobs for everybody in America who wants to work, and we have spent a lot of time saying that people who are able-bodied, who can work, should be required to work. Now, we are also reminding ourselves that no one, anywhere, should have to put their safety or their dignity on the line to support themselves or their children. This is a great day for America, a great day for the cause of human rights, and I believe a great day for free enterprise. And I thank all of those who are here who made it possible.

I'm proud that this agreement was industry-led and wholly voluntary. Like the TV industry's decision to rate its programming, like the new private sector effort to help move people from welfare to work, like the high-tech industry's efforts to wire our schools and our classrooms to the Internet, all of them, by the year 2000—which we will continue this Saturday—this is further evidence that we can solve our problems by working together in new and creative ways.

The apparel industry understands that we all share a stake in preparing our country for the 21st century and preparing the world to be a good partner. Reaching across lines that have too often divided us in the past, this new partnership will create more opportunity for working families. It will demand more responsibility for working conditions. It will build a stronger community here in America and bind us to the community of people all around the world who believe in the value of work but who also believe in the importance of its dignity and sanctity.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to entertainer Kathie Lee Gifford and the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE).

## Message to the Congress on the Generalized System of Preferences April 11, 1997

*To the Congress of the United States:*

The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program offers duty-free treatment to specified products that are imported from designated developing countries. The program is authorized by title V of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended.

Pursuant to title V, I have determined that Argentina fails to provide adequate and effective means under its laws for foreign nationals to secure, to exercise, and to enforce exclusive rights in intellectual property. As a result, I have determined to withdraw benefits for 50 percent (approximately \$260 million) of Argentina's exports under the GSP program. The products subject to removal include chemicals, certain

metals and metal products, a variety of manufactured products, and several agricultural items (raw cane sugar, garlic, fish, milk protein concentrates, and anchovies).

This notice is submitted in accordance with the requirements of title V of the Trade Act of 1974.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

April 11, 1997.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 15. The related proclamation of April 11 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks on Kick Butts Day in Brooklyn, New York April 15, 1997

*The President.* Thank you. Good morning. Let me, first of all, say that I am delighted to be here. And I thought Ayana gave a wonderful introduction, didn't you? Give her a hand. [Applause]

I'm delighted to be here with all of the young people at the Hudde School, not only those who are here but those who are outside this room listening to us and looking at us over closed-circuit television. There are young people around New York and all across America participating in this second annual Kick Butts Day. But I am glad to be here.

I thank your principal, Julia Bove, for making me feel so welcome. I am delighted to be here with Congressman Chuck Schumer, my longtime friend who has worked so hard on this tobacco issue, and also he's worked hard on the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill and other things to make the streets of New York safer for children.

I'm glad to be here with Major Owens who was a very early supporter of mine here and who has been a great champion for education. You heard him talking about education—we're trying to get this Congress to really focus on the education needs of our children. And if it

does happen in this Congress and we get the kind of progress that I think we will, it will be in no small measure due to Major Owens. I thank you, Major, for your leadership.

And I want you to think about Mark Green's title a minute because I'm going to talk to you about my job, their jobs, your jobs in a minute. Mark Green's title is the public advocate. I don't know if there's another city in America that has an elected public advocate. But think about what that means. What would it mean for you to be a public advocate? Someone who is standing up for people at large, right? For the public. Now, it was in that connection that Mark Green created this day, Kick Butts Day, all across the United States; he was the first official to ask to ban cartoon figures in tobacco ads—to his fight for at-risk and uninsured children. He's been fighting for children, but just think about it, because he was advocating for the public in New York, we now have a national Kick Butts Day involving, as you heard, about 2 million people. That's an incredible thing, and we thank Mark Green for his leadership for that.

I also want to thank Bill Novelli and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. I thank the others who are here on the platform with me today: