

Statement on the Study by the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence *September 19, 1997*

Today's study released by the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence confirms what we have known all along: that the Brady law is helping to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. The study also gives us more good news about the Brady law—that it has worked to help disrupt illegal gun trafficking patterns, making it more difficult for gun traffickers to do business.

While States are no longer required to conduct Brady background checks in light of the Supreme Court's recent decision, I am pleased that State and local law enforcement agencies around the country are overwhelmingly con-

tinuing to do these checks on a voluntary basis. Our goal remains unchanged: no background check, no handgun purchase.

I have pledged to do everything in my power to make sure that we continue to keep handguns out of the hands of criminals—including extending Brady background checks to violent juveniles who should not be able to buy a gun on their 21st birthday. Today's study further makes the case that for the safety of our communities and of all Americans, Brady background checks must continue.

The President's Radio Address *September 20, 1997*

Good morning. We're living in a time of great hope and optimism and prosperity in our Nation. Our economy is booming. We've cut the deficit 80 percent and passed a plan to balance the budget. Crime and welfare rolls are dropping. But perhaps most important for the long-term future of America, this has been a banner year for education, too.

Our historic balanced budget is truly an education budget, with the largest new investment in education since 1965, from more children in Head Start to our America Reads program that will mobilize a million volunteers to make sure all our children can read when they leave the third grade, to putting computers in all our classrooms and libraries by the year 2000.

We've also had the largest increased investment in helping people to go on to college since the passage of the GI bill 50 years ago. The increased Pell grant scholarships and work study positions, the HOPE scholarship to help pay for the first 2 years of college, and other tax credits and IRA's, all these things will truly open the doors of college to all who are willing to work for it for the first time in American history.

But we can't rest. We have more to do in education to fully prepare our children to seize the opportunities of the new century. And espe-

cially, we all know we have to do more to improve the quality of public education.

I have called upon all Americans to leave politics at the schoolhouse door and to work together to provide our children with the best education in the world. And many have answered that call. Just last week, the Senate voted overwhelmingly, 87 to 12, for voluntary national tests in fourth grade reading and eighth grade math, bringing us an important step closer to setting high national standards of academic excellence that will ensure that no child leaves our schools without mastering the basics.

Unfortunately, two events in recent days have jeopardized this essential progress in education. First, the same forces that have resisted education reform and high standards and accountability for years in the House of Representatives have voted against developing the national standards we need to challenge students, improve teaching, empower parents, and increase accountability in our schools. In effect, they've cast their votes against better schools and for a status quo that is failing too many of our children.

Second, the Senate narrowly passed an amendment that would undermine some of our most successful efforts in the last 5 years to strengthen our schools. National efforts to bring