

## Statement on Earth Day April 22, 1999

Today, the last Earth Day of the 20th century, is an opportunity to celebrate America's achievements in protecting our environment and public health and to dedicate ourselves to meeting the environmental challenges of the new century ahead.

Working together, we have made tremendous progress since the first Earth Day in cleaning our air and water, protecting our communities and children from toxic threats, and preserving our precious lands. Americans have demonstrated time and again that we can safeguard our environment even as we grow our economy. I am proud of all that Vice President Gore and I have done to advance these efforts over the past 6 years.

Today the Vice President announces a national strategy to reduce air pollution and restore pristine skies in our national parks and wilderness areas so future generations can see and enjoy them in all their natural splendor. This is but one effort to leave this a better

land for our descendants. I join the Vice President in calling on Congress to approve our lands legacy initiative, dedicating permanent funding so that years from now Americans can continue protecting and restoring the deserts, mountains, coastlands, and plains that are so much a part of our Nation's heritage.

A new century brings new environmental challenges—perhaps the greatest is global warming. There is no clearer reminder that we are, indeed, all members of one global community. Only by acting together—as a nation, and in partnership with other nations—can we avert this common threat. This is a challenge the Vice President and I are fully committed to meeting.

It is my sincere hope that when Americans gather 100 years from now to celebrate Earth Day, they will remember us as dedicated stewards of our Nation's air, water, and land, and will instill the same spirit in all those who follow.

## Remarks on School Safety and an Exchange With Reporters April 23, 1999

*The President.* Good morning. Before I leave to go to the NATO Summit this morning, I'd like to say just a few more words about the tragedy in Littleton and the steps we're taking to make all our schools safer.

The images from Colorado have become painfully familiar, the terrified children, the racing ambulances, the grieving families. We saw them last year, in Pearl, West Paducah, Jonesboro, Springfield. We were reminded again this week that none of our communities is immune to senseless violence.

Still, it is important to remember and to remind our children that the vast majority of our schools are safe. Nearly everywhere in America a child still is safer in school than anywhere else in the community.

But this week's tragedy reminds us again that one act of violence is one too many. We must do more to keep guns out of the hands of chil-

dren, to help our young people express their anger and alienation with words, not weapons, to prevent violence from shattering the peace of our schoolyards.

I've spoken to Attorney General Reno, who was at the scene yesterday to assist law enforcement in their investigation and to offer comfort to the students and the families. I also talked with Dr. DeStefano and the school board last evening for a few minutes to share some thoughts with them and to express my appreciation to them for their efforts.

The Justice Department today will make \$1½ million from our crime victims trust fund available to help the communities assist the victims in their long journey toward recovery. And we will do more.

Last October, at our White House Conference on School Safety, I launched a new initiative to bring more of the same community policing