

June 22 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Statement on Proposed Legislation To Bolster Enforcement of Gun Laws

June 22, 2000

Today the House has an opportunity to bolster our efforts to fight gun crime in America as it considers the Commerce, Justice, State appropriations bill. In its current form, the bill severely underfunds my \$280 million national gun enforcement initiative—including funding for 1,000 new State and local gun prosecutors, anti-gun violence media campaigns, and smart gun technology. I urge the House to pass Representative Lowey's amendment to provide \$150 million to hire State and local gun prosecutors to put more gun criminals behind bars.

Yesterday the Treasury Department released its first-ever gun ATF gun trafficking report demonstrating my administration's commitment to tough gun enforcement and the need to close deadly loopholes in our laws that make gun shows and corrupt dealers favorite supply channels for illegal traffickers. Congress can take immediate action to address these issues and make

progress in the fight to reduce gun violence. Instead, the House attempted to undermine the administration's historic gun safety agreement with Smith & Wesson last night. Despite the failure of this attempt, the Republican leadership continues its assault on this agreement at a time when our Nation loses nearly 12 children per day in gunfire.

We should be doing all we can to move forward in the fight to reduce gun violence, not backward. I urge Congress to focus on measures that will improve public safety by fully funding my national gun enforcement initiative to give law enforcement even more tools to crack down on gun criminals. And Congress should finally pass the stalled commonsense gun safety legislation to close the gun show loophole and take other steps to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

Statement on the Shootings of Government Meat Inspectors

June 22, 2000

I was shocked and saddened to learn of the tragic shootings of three government inspectors, including two U.S. Department of Agriculture employees, in California. The Federal Government is working closely with local authorities on this matter. This grievous act was committed

against dedicated individuals who were working to ensure the public's health and safety. I want to join all Americans in extending our thoughts and prayers to the victims and their families and coworkers.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Proposed Energy Policy Legislation

June 22, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

With so much attention focused on the recent spike in gasoline prices and OPEC's decision to increase production quotas, it is critical that we not lose sight of our nation's long-term energy needs. For seven years, my Administration has pursued a sound, comprehensive policy to address those needs. Regrettably, several key elements of this Administration's strategy have

languished in Congress. In recent days, in fact, budget initiatives to strengthen our energy supply have suffered significant cuts, while some Members have advanced proposals that would seriously harm our environment in the name of energy security. I urge you to work closely with me to enact these critical energy proposals without further delay.

I remain very concerned about high gasoline prices and find the situation in the Chicago/Milwaukee region particularly troubling. Last week, the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Environmental Protection Agency sent analysts to the region to explore the reasons for this price differential. While a number of factors appear to have contributed to the unusually high prices in the region, it is possible that they may not account for the entire increase in gas prices. The Federal Trade Commission has initiated an investigation of pricing practices in the region to determine if there is any unfair or illegal activity there. We look forward to the results of these investigations.

Our concern about high gasoline prices in the short-term, however, cannot be allowed to distract us from addressing the long-term energy needs of our nation. My Administration has pursued an energy policy that provides a comprehensive and balanced approach to addressing the nation's energy needs. Unfortunately, Congress is considering proposals that are unnecessary and would do irrevocable harm to the environment, such as opening the Arctic refuge to drilling. Instead, Congress should act on the following key pieces of my energy policy.

First, I have proposed a \$4 billion package of tax incentives to encourage consumers to purchase more efficient cars, homes, and consumer products. Congress has failed to enact this package for over two years, even though these tax credits would save consumers money, protect our environment, and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. I also have proposed tax incentives to support renewable energy and the domestic oil industry, including the expensing of geological and geophysical expenses and delay rental payments.

Second, over the past seven years I have repeatedly proposed significant increases in Federal investments in responsible domestic sources of energy, including most recently \$1.4 billion in FY 2001 for high-priority items at DOE for energy efficiency, renewable energy, natural gas, and distributed power generation systems. Specific examples of these investments include more efficient technologies for our factories and homes, weatherization of low income households, technologies to produce biofuels and power from biomass, and the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles (PNGV)—a collaborative effort with automakers to deliver affordable cars that are three times more fuel

efficient. Yet, Congress has failed to support these critical goals, approving only 12 percent of our proposed increases for energy efficiency and renewables over the past seven years. This year, the House has already cut DOE's FY 2001 budget for energy efficiency programs below last year's enacted level and has cut virtually all DOE funding for the PNGV program.

Third, two years ago I submitted the Comprehensive Electricity Restructuring Act to Congress, to improve the operation and efficiency of the electricity sector. Congress to date has not enacted a comprehensive restructuring bill. Such legislation would improve the reliability of our electric power system, provide American consumers an estimated annual savings of \$20 billion as a result of competition in electricity markets, and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Fourth, to address energy supply emergencies, I have called for reauthorization of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), the establishment of a regional home heating oil reserve in the Northeast, and replenishment of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program emergency funds. Authorization for the SPR expired on March 31, 2000. It is critical that the SPR be reauthorized so that I have available all means to respond to any possible energy supply emergency. Further, the Department of Energy cannot establish a regional home heating oil reserve in the Northeast to respond to shortages of home heating oil until Congress either reauthorizes the SPR or separately passes legislation authorizing the creation of such a reserve with a responsible trigger. Because Congress has failed to act thus far, it will be virtually impossible to establish a home heating oil reserve in time for next winter.

America needs a balanced, forward-looking energy policy based on the proposals that my Administration has put before Congress. We are committed to a responsible approach that will infuse our energy sector with both efficiency and competition; that values clean air, clean water, and healthy lands; and that seeks to cushion America against emergencies in the energy market. Congress should act on my proposals without further hesitation.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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NOTE: Letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott,

Senate majority leader; and Tom Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Message to the Senate Transmitting an Amendment to the Montreal Protocol

June 22, 2000

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (the "Montreal Protocol"), adopted at Beijing on December 3, 1999, by the Eleventh Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (the "Beijing Amendment"). The report of the Department of State is also enclosed for the information of the Senate.

The principal features of the Beijing Amendment, which was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program, are the addition of trade controls on hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), the addition of production controls on HCFCs, the addition of bromochloromethane to the substances controlled under the Montreal Protocol, and the addition of mandatory reporting requirements on the use of methyl bromide for quarantine and preshipment purposes. The Beijing Amendment will constitute a major step forward in

protecting public health and the environment from potential adverse effects of stratospheric ozone depletion.

By its terms, the Beijing Amendment will enter into force on January 1, 2001, provided that at least 20 parties have indicated their consent to be bound. The Beijing Amendment provides that no State may become a party unless it previously has become (or simultaneously becomes) a party to the 1997 Montreal Amendment. The Montreal Amendment is currently before the Senate for its advice and consent to ratification (Senate Treaty Doc. No. 106-10).

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Beijing Amendment and give its advice and consent to ratification, at the same time as it gives its advice and consent to ratification of the Montreal Amendment.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 22, 2000.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Susan Davis in San Diego, California

June 22, 2000

Thank you. I'm sorry Susan couldn't be here today, but I'm glad she's doing her job. *[Laughter]* That's what Democrats do. And I feel really comfortable having Steve here, because we're both campaigning for positions in the congressional spouses club. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Congressman Bob Filner for that rousing speech and for the wonderful service he gives to you, to California, and to our Nation every day in the United States Congress.

Somewhere in this crowd we have two other Democratic candidates for Congress, George Barraza and Craig Barkacs. Where are they? They're here somewhere. Give them a hand. There they are. *[Applause]* On my way in, the first lady of California, Sharon Davis, met me. I want to thank her for being here.

And I want to say to all of you, thanks. I think all of you know the role that this State played in our campaign in '92 and in '96; the unbelievable vote we got here against all the