

Statement on the Observance of Nowruz
March 20, 2000

This week people of Iranian heritage around the world will celebrate Nowruz, the Persian New Year. Nowruz is a tradition as old as the land of Persia, but at the same time it celebrates change and renewal: the changing season from winter to spring, a new year and a new beginning. It is a time to gather with family and

friends and to look toward the future. I extend my best wishes for the new year to Americans of Iranian origin and to the people of Iran. I hope this season will bring the start of a new era of better relations between our two countries.

Nowruz Mubarak.

Letter to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on Gun Safety Legislation
March 20, 2000

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Since last summer, I have repeatedly urged the Congress to finish its work on juvenile crime legislation and pass a balanced, bipartisan bill with strong gun measures to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. However, I am troubled by your recent comments that you are considering stripping the Senate-passed commonsense gun provisions out of the final conference report. Legislation intended to address the problem of youth violence simply cannot ignore the most devastating problem facing our youth—gun violence.

Let me be clear: I will not sign juvenile crime legislation that fails to move forward in our efforts to make guns safer, and to keep them out of the hands of children and criminals.

Last summer, the Senate passed reasonable gun provisions that would help do just this, by closing the gun show loophole, requiring child safety locks for handguns, barring violent juveniles from owning guns as adults, and banning the importation of large capacity ammunition clips. These measures can help save lives and should be enacted without further delay.

Last week, my Administration, joined by many cities and states, reached a landmark agreement

with Smith and Wesson under which the company will change the way it designs, distributes, and markets its products. That pact—which includes important provisions on gun shows, child safety locks, and large ammunition clips—is proof that when reasonable people choose to sit down and negotiate, they can find common ground and protect the public interest. I hope Congress can now build on that example.

Nearly a year has passed since the tragedy at Columbine High School, and gunfire continues to take the lives of nearly a dozen young people a day. That is why I urge you once again to finish the job you started last year and send me a comprehensive juvenile crime bill that contains the Senate-passed gun safety measures. No task could be more urgent.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This letter was sent to Orrin G. Hatch, chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.