

Message to the Littleton, Colorado, Community *April 20, 2000*

It is written in Scripture: “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Hillary and I are with you in the spirit of comfort and prayer as you gather to remember those who lost their lives one year ago today.

You do not mourn alone. What happened in Littleton pierced the soul of America. Though a year has passed, time has not dimmed our memory or softened our grief at the loss of so many, whose lives were cut off in the promise of youth. It has not caused us to forget their gallant teacher—a man whose character and values brought so much strength to the school, sports teams, and community he served.

Last year, in the midst of the heartbreak and devastation of the Columbine tragedy, we saw

the American spirit at its best—in the spontaneous outpouring of support for the Littleton community and in the determination to prevent such tragedies in the future. Our hearts have not yet fully healed, but today America stands together as one to keep faith with all those who lost their lives at Columbine—and all those whose lives were forever changed that day. We must continue to honor their memory and your courage by resolving to make America a safer place for all our children.

Hillary and I continue to keep all of you in our thoughts and prayers.

BILL CLINTON

Videotaped Remarks to a National Campaign Against Youth Violence Townhall Meeting *April 21, 2000*

Good evening. I’m so pleased to join you as the National Campaign Against Youth Violence kicks off its City-By-City initiative.

Seven years ago I had the honor to speak at the Church of God in Christ in Memphis. That morning I spoke about the awful toll of youth violence and gun crime in our communities. On that day I said, unless we deal with the ravages of crime and violence, none of the other things we seek to do will ever take us where we need to go.

Together, we have come a long way in the last 7 years. With our strategy of putting more cops on the beat and getting more guns off the street, overall crime has fallen for the seventh year in a row. The juvenile violent crime arrest rate is the lowest in 10 years. And with 100,000 new community police officers and the Brady law, we’ve kept guns out of the hands of a half-million felons, fugitives, and stalkers.

But while we’ve made great progress, one act of violence is still too many. Nearly a year has passed since the awful tragedy at Columbine, and gunfire continues to take the lives

of nearly a dozen young people every single day.

If we’re going to reach our goal of making America the safest big country on Earth, all of us have a responsibility to act. And Congress has to do its part, too, by sending me common-sense gun legislation that mandates child safety locks, closes the gun show loophole, bans the importation of large ammunition clips, and holds adults accountable when they allow young people to get their hands on deadly guns.

Our administration is trying to do its part by strengthening the enforcement of our gun laws, supporting more after-school programs, more mentoring, and more conflict resolution and peer mediation. Last year we helped to launch the National Campaign Against Youth Violence, and we established a new White House Youth Violence Council to coordinate the wide-ranging efforts of the Federal Government.

We’re also working hard to ensure that all Americans are treated with dignity and that no American is victimized by violence because of his or her race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. That’s why we’ve fought so hard to