

taught, that the most important fact of our common existence on this Earth is our common humanity.

The human genome research project has documented that we are genetically 99.9 percent the same. Furthermore, that the differences among people within the same ethnic or racial groups are greater than the genetic differences between profiles of different racial groups.

Now, this is a stunning thing. In other words, this is not an affair of the body. It is an affair of the heart, of the spirit. It is, therefore, an even more dangerous kind of infection. I don't think any of us believe we can ever root it out just by punishing people. But the most important thing is that we do have the tools we need to take a strong stand before these things spread even wider. That's what Sherialyn said, and that's why she came.

We've got a chance here to reaffirm America at its best. And I hope we can do it, because the most important thing, if we want to make the most of all this modern, wondrous economy we have, is to get rid of our oldest demons and build one America.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:48 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Commander David O'Malley, Laramie Police Department, WY, who investigated the murder of Matthew Shepard; Sherialyn Byrdsong, widow of Ricky Byrdsong; Justin Dart, Jr., chairman and founder, Justice For All; and Rev. David S. Handley, senior pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Evanston, IL.

Statement on Reauthorization of the COPS Program

September 13, 2000

Six years ago today I signed the historic 1994 crime bill into law with a vision of bringing communities and local law enforcement together to take back our streets and win the war against crime. Since enactment of this vital law, crime has dropped every year to its lowest level in over 25 years, and America is the safest it has been in a generation. One of the most important factors in our success is the Community Oriented Policing Service (COPS) program, which has funded over 105,000 police officers for our streets. Today Attorney General Janet Reno will release a report to Congress on the positive impact the COPS program has had on communities of all sizes and regions across America. By building partnerships and trust with residents, COPS officers are not only helping reduce crime but the fear of crime, as well, restoring hope and promise for the future in neighborhoods across America.

The Attorney General will also announce over \$55 million in community policing grants to more than 700 communities to hire or redeploy of over 1,600 police officers, to develop 311 non-emergency hotline programs, and to install cameras in over 2,900 law enforcement vehicles to improve officer safety and promote officer integrity. Although the COPS program continues to make progress by giving communities the tools they need to fight crime, we must do more. I urge Congress to make the 21st century the safest yet by reauthorizing the COPS program for another 5 years and fully funding my \$1.3 billion budget request to help put up to an additional 50,000 officers on the street and provide law enforcement and communities with more resources than ever to keep American families safe. Together, we can make America the safest big country in the world.

Statement on Action Concerning Japanese Whaling Practices *September 13, 2000*

Following Secretary Mineta's certification that Japan is undermining international whaling protections with its expanded whaling program, I am today directing that Japan be denied future access to fishing rights in U.S. waters and directing members of my Cabinet to consider additional steps we might take, including possible trade sanctions.

Strong international cooperation has allowed the recovery of many whale species once pushed to the brink of extinction. We must work to ensure that these protections are upheld. I hope that the steps we take today will encourage Japan to reverse its actions and respect the strong international consensus that has helped bring back some of Earth's most majestic creatures.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process *September 13, 2000*

I was encouraged by today's historic first visit to the White House by the leaders of Northern Ireland's new Government, established under the Good Friday accord. First Minister David Trimble and Deputy First Minister Seamus Mallon conveyed to me their absolute commitment to make the new political institutions work for the benefit of all the people of Northern Ireland. Although the institutions have only been fully operating for a matter of weeks, elected representatives from across the party spectrum are working together on issues—from economic development to the environment to health and education—that hold the key to a better life for their constituents, who now hold them accountable under devolution of power.

While difficult issues relating to implementation of the Good Friday accord remain, I am convinced following today's meeting that all the parties can work together to overcome their dif-

ferences and that they fully recognize the importance of doing so to ensure that these historic achievements are not lost. The ongoing violence reminds us of the need for all parties to carry out their obligations under the accord, and for those with political aims to pursue them through exclusively peaceful means.

I am grateful for the invitation extended to me to visit Northern Ireland. I reaffirm my desire to continue to support the peace process in any way we can.

Thanks to courageous and determined leadership, the people of Northern Ireland face a brighter future now than at any time in the last three decades. As those in zones of conflict around the world search for hope, they need look no further than Northern Ireland, whose leaders have proved that risks for peace are worth taking.

Statement on the Congressional Effort To Override the Veto of Marriage Penalty Tax Relief Legislation *September 13, 2000*

Through 7 years of tough choices and fiscal discipline, we have changed record deficits to surpluses, paid down the debt for 3 years in a row, and put America on course to be debt-free by 2012. As today's vote demonstrates, the

majority in Congress still seems to be determined to knock America off this path of fiscal discipline with a 10 year tax plan that will drain nearly \$2 trillion from the surplus and drive us back into deficits.