

**Letter to Members of the Senate on
Crime Legislation**

August 22, 1994

Dear _____:

This week, the Senate has an historic chance to move us beyond old labels and partisan divisions by passing the toughest, smartest Crime Bill in our nation's history.

I want to congratulate members of Congress in both houses and both parties who have reached across party lines and worked in good faith to produce this Crime Bill. This isn't a Democratic Crime Bill or a Republican Crime Bill—it's an American Crime Bill, and it will make a difference in every town, every city, and every state in our country.

The Crime Bill produced by House and Senate conferees and passed yesterday by Democrats and Republicans in the House achieves all the same objectives as the bipartisan Crime Bill which the Senate passed last November by a vote of 95 to 4.

Many of the central provisions of this Crime Bill were included in the Senate bill:

- * Nearly \$9 billion to put 100,000 new police officers on our streets in community policing;

- * An additional \$4.6 billion for federal, state and local law enforcement (a 25% increase above the Senate bill);

- * \$9.9 billion for prisons (a 30% increase above the Senate bill), coupled with tough truth-in-sentencing requirements that will shut the revolving door on violent criminals;

- * Life imprisonment for repeat violent offenders by making three-strikes-and-you're-out the law of the land;

- * Federal death penalties for the most heinous of crimes, such as killing a law enforcement officer;

- * A ban on handgun ownership for juveniles;

- * Registration and community notification to warn unsuspecting families of sexual predators in their midst;

- * A ban on 19 semiautomatic assault weapons, with specific protection for more than 650 other weapons; and

- * Innovative crime prevention programs, such as the Community Schools program sponsored by Senators Danforth, Bradley,

and Dodd, and the Violence Against Women Act sponsored by Senators Biden, Hatch, and Dole.

One of the most important elements of this Crime Bill is the creation of a Violent Crime Reduction Trust Fund, which ensures that every crime-fighting program in the bill will be paid for by reducing the federal bureaucracy by more than 270,000 positions over the next six years. The idea for the Trust Fund came from Senators Byrd, Mitchell, Biden, Gramm, Hatch, and Dole, and the Senate approved it by a vote of 94 to 4. The Trust Fund will ensure that the entire Crime Bill will be fully paid for, not with new taxes, but by reducing the federal bureaucracy to its lowest level in over 30 years.

The Senate led the way in passing these important anti-crime proposals last November, and I urge you to take up this Crime Bill in the same bipartisan spirit that marked that debate. The American people have waited six years for a comprehensive Crime Bill. It's time to put politics aside and finish the job. After all the hard work that has gone into this effort by members of both parties acting in good faith, we owe it to the law-abiding citizens of this country to pass this Crime Bill without delay.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Senators of the 103d Congress. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 23.

**Remarks on Signing the King
Holiday and Service Act of 1994**

August 23, 1994

Good morning. Thank you. Please be seated. It was such a beautiful and, for August, a cool summer day, we thought we ought to move to the Rose Garden today and give us all a chance to enjoy this wonderful beauty.

Senator Wofford, Congressman Lewis, Martin Luther King III, Mr. Segal, ladies and gentlemen, we're here for the signing of the King Holiday and Service Act of 1994. And I have some words I want to say about that, but if I might, I'd like to mention a few things about the service that the Congress is en-

gaged in performing at the present moment with regard to the crime bill.

On Sunday evening Democrats and Republicans in the House produced a victory for all Americans by passing the bill. They showed that with a little faith and a lot of hard work, they could reach across the partisan divide that have held this country back for too long to pass a bill that is both tough and smart, that is firm and compassionate, that gives us a chance to lower the crime rate and make our people safer.

Many of the best ideas in the bill were ones contributed by both Democrats and Republicans: to put 100,000 police on the streets, to keep violent offenders off the streets with longer sentences and “three strikes and you’re out,” to prohibit juveniles from owning handguns, to ban assault weapons, to provide innovative and proven prevention programs to give our children a chance to have a better future—programs, I want to emphasize, that were sponsored in this legislation by members of both parties.

And one of the best ideas in the bill was also supported in both Houses by members of both parties, that is, to establish a trust fund funded by the reductions in the Federal work force over the next 6 years, 270,000, to bring our Federal Government to its smallest size in over 30 years and to give all that money back to our local communities for police, for punishment, and for prevention, not by raising taxes, not by cutting other services but simply reducing the size of the Federal Government to its lowest point in 30 years. This trust fund was sponsored by leaders from both parties, including Senators Byrd, Mitchell, and Biden for the Democrats, Senators Dole, Gramm, and Hatch for the Republicans. It passed the Senate by a vote of 94 to 4 the first time.

When this bill comes back, it will be a little different from the bill that passed the Senate, but not much. It lasts 6 years instead of 5 years. It has some more money for border patrol and other problems. But it’s not much bigger on an annual basis, and it’s all paid for in the same way. Every Senator, without regard to party, ought to continue the bipartisan spirit that was established in the House for an American approach to an American problem. That is the service we ought to be

performing today, to make this an American crime bill and to do it without delay.

The King Holiday and Service Act of 1994 in this bill combines for the very first time our national holiday in honor of Dr. King with a national day of service. Nothing could be more appropriate, for it was Dr. King who said everyone can be great because everyone can serve. I always think of the great line he said, that if a person was a street sweeper, he ought to sweep the streets as if he were Michelangelo painting the Sistine Chapel and try to be the best one in the whole world. That is what I think all of us ought to be about doing.

Dr. King taught us that our faith can redeem us, that the sacrifices of individuals can sustain us, that moral courage can guide us. He dedicated himself to what was in his time and what remains the most difficult challenge we face as a democratic people: closing the great gap between our words and our deeds.

Now we are attempting in this bill and in this administration to accept this challenge for those who are still barred from the American dream and for those who worry that their children will have less of it than they had. We’re doing our best here to give Government back to ordinary citizens, with an administration that is really more like America than any ever has been, not only in terms of its racial and gender diversity but also in its commitment to excellence, with 4 million new jobs, 20 million young people eligible for reduced college loans, 15 million working families getting tax cuts, and 3 years of reduction in our deficit for the first time since Mr. Truman was the President.

We demanded fairness in all public services and especially in housing, not only in Vidor, Texas, but all across the United States. We fought to empower the next generation of our working people, beginning with Head Start and world-class educational standards, and apprenticeship programs for those who don’t go to college, and more and less expensive college loans and national service for those who wish to pursue higher education. We fought to strengthen our communities with empowerment zones and community development banks. And we fought to make our people safer with the Brady bill and hopefully with this crime bill.

But we know and we learn here every day that laws alone cannot restore the American family, cannot give individuals the sense of self-worth and purpose, cannot make the American community what it ought to be. It takes the miracle that begins with personal choices and personal actions and that cuts through the fog of cynicism and negativism that grips every American from time to time and has often gripped this country too much.

Giving every citizen at the grassroots a chance to make a difference in his or her own life is a big part of what our efforts are all about. This law helps us to do that by linking the observance of Dr. King's birthday to a day of national service, an extraordinary idea and a timely one because just next month we will launch AmeriCorps in full-blown initiative, with 20,000 young people serving their communities at the grassroots level and earning some credit to further their education while doing so. Nothing could better serve the legacy of Dr. King. He was apathy's sworn enemy and action's tireless champion.

The King Commission has already sponsored seven national youth assemblies where young people address issues for themselves, such as drug abuse, illiteracy, and the importance of staying in school. The largest and most recent assembly took place in the capital of my home State, Little Rock, where Governor Tucker hosted 1,300 young people. Overall, the Commission has already helped to recruit 4½ million young people to sign a pledge where they say no to violence and drugs and yes to serving in their communities. That is a truly revolutionary achievement.

With today's action we can broaden that effort. We can give many more an opportunity to make a difference, to respond to the needs of their communities, whether through tutoring children or housing the homeless, improving parks or keeping our people safer. As Senator Wofford has said in what I think is one of his best statements, "The King holiday should be a day on, not a day off."

Dr. King's time with us was too brief. But his vision was so great, his moral purpose was so strong that he made us believe that we could be better than we are and that someday

we would be able to walk hand in hand together into a brighter tomorrow.

He said, and I quote, "Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness. Life's most persistent and urgent question is what are you doing for others?"

Today we can say with some pride we have given all Americans a better chance to work together and to help others. This celebration of Dr. King will now be a celebration of his vision of community, his vision of service. And his life proves that it will work for all Americans and for our country.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Eli J. Segal, Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of National Service. H.R. 1933, approved August 23, was assigned Public Law No. 103-304.

Statement on Signing the Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act of 1994

August 23, 1994

I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 2739, the "Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act of 1994." It is exceedingly satisfying when legislation is presented for enactment that reflects both of the things the American people want from their Government—action by the Government when clearly needed and action to eliminate Government regulation when it proves counterproductive.

When I came into office, the aviation industry was struggling with large losses, reduced airline travel because of the recession, and a loss of aircraft orders at many of our biggest manufacturers. The problems ran deep. I know because I visited businesses to get an idea of the extent of the problems. In the face of these problems, the Government did not sit back.

With the support of the industry and other interested groups, we enacted amendments to the law that created the National Commission to Ensure a Strong Competitive Airline Industry. Building on the Commission's rec-