

The report has been endorsed by hundreds of grassroots organizations and religious leaders from the evangelical, Catholic, Jewish and Orthodox communities. I urge all Members to read the attached executive summary and the full report as we continue to address the problem of youth violence and delinquency.

“THERE IS A VIRUS LOOSE WITHIN OUR CULTURE:” AN HONEST LOOK AT MUSIC’S IMPACT
(By Thomas L. Jipping)

After two teenagers killed twelve of their peers, a teacher, and themselves at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, Governor Bill Owens said that “there is a virus loose within our culture.” The effort to identify that virus is properly focusing on visually powerful elements of youth culture such as television, movies, and video games. This report addresses whether non-visual media such as popular music are also part of this cultural virus that can help lead some young people to violence.

Five days after the massacre, on NBC’s Meet the Press, host Tim Russert reported that the Littleton killers idolized shock-rocker Marilyn Manson, described by even the music press as an “ultra-violent satanic rock monstrosity.” They were not alone. Kip Kinkel, who murdered his parents and two students in Springfield, Oregon, consumed Manson’s message. Andrew Wurst, who killed a teacher at an eighth-grade dance in Edinboro, Pennsylvania, was nicknamed “Satan” because he “was a fan of rocker Marilyn Manson and his dark music.” Luke Woodham, who murdered his parents and a classmate in Pearl, Mississippi, was a fan of Manson’s “nihilistic” lyrics.

This pattern includes other violent youths whose plans were foiled. A Leesburg, Virginia, boy suspended for making threats against students who mocked his work was fascinated with Marilyn Manson. Five Wisconsin teenagers who had planned “a bloodbath at their school in revenge for being teased” consumed Manson’s message.

Some claim this is all just a coincidence. Perhaps, but a series of parallels suggests a more concrete connection. The first is the parallel between the facts of these cases, the motivation of the killers, and the themes in the music they consumed. According to media reports, these boys all killed out of hatred for, or revenge against, those who had offended, harassed, or persecuted them. Luke Woodham, for example, had said that “the world has wronged me.”

Consider what their idol Marilyn Manson told them to do about it:

“The big bully try to stick his finger in my chest, try to tell me, tell me he’s the best. But I don’t really give a good * * * cause I got my lunchbox and I’m armed real well. . . . Next * * * gonna get my metal. . . . Pow pow pow, pow pow pow, pow pow pow, pow pow pow. . . . I wanna grow up so no one * * * with me

“But your selective judgments and goodguy badges don’t mean a * * * to me. I throw a little fit. I slit my teenage wrist. . . . Get your gunn, get your gunn

“I hate the hater, I’d rape the raper

“There’s no time to discriminate, hate every * * * that’s in your way.

“There is no cure for what is killing me, I’m on my way down; I’ve looked ahead and saw a world that’s dead, I guess I am too; I’m on my way down, I’d like to take you with me

“I’ll make everyone pay and you will see . . . The boy that you loved is the monster you fear.

“When you are suffering know that I have betrayed you

“Shoot here and the world gets smaller; Shoot shoot shoot * * *

“Live like a teenage christ; I’m a saint, got a date with suicide

“I’m dying, I hope you’re dying too

“I’m gonna hate you tomorrow because you make me hate you today”

The second parallel is the message Manson himself says he tries to promote. *Ordained in the Church of Satan, Manson has said that [Church of Satan founder Anton] LaVey along with Nietzsche and [British Satanist Aleister] Crowley have all been great influences on the way that I think.* In a foreword to the book *Satan Speaks*, Manson wrote that “Anton LaVey was the most righteous man I’ve ever known.”

On CNN’s *The American Edge* program, Manson explained his message: “God is dead, you are your own god. It’s a lot about self preservation. . . . It’s the part of you that no longer has hope in mankind. And you realize that you are the only thing you believe in.” Manson has compared Christians to Nazis and insists that “hate is just as healthy and worthwhile as love.” This message contributes to the situation Vice President Al Gore described at a Littleton memorial service on April 25, 1999: “Too many young people place too little value on human life.”

The third parallel is Manson’s own life, which looks similar to those who consume and act on his message. In one interview, he described it this way: “Then I had to go to public school and they would always kick my ass. . . . So I didn’t end up having a lot of friends and music was the only thing I had to enjoy. So I got into [heavy metal rock bands] Kiss, Black Sabbath and things like that.”

While Marilyn Manson alone is not the problem, his brand of music promotes violence more aggressively than ever. Indeed, Manson’s own response to the Littleton massacre raises the issue to be addressed here. Television or even religion may cause youth violence, he says, but music plays no role whatsoever. In fact, he claims that he is actually a victim when he asserts that the media “has unfairly scapegoated the music industry. . . . and has speculated—with no basis in truth—that artists like myself are in some way [sic] to blame.”

Unfortunately, it appears that the music industry’s only response to this cultural crisis is simply to deny that its products have any effect on anyone. One the June 29, 1999, edition on CNN’s *Showbiz Today* program, for example, musician Billy Joel dismissed as “absurd” the idea that music influences violent behavior. Elton John put it more bluntly: “It has nothing to do with the musical content or the lyrics whatsoever. [The idea is] absolute rubbish.”

No one, or course, argues that popular music is the sole cause of youth violence. Something as complex as human behavior does not have a sole cause. The question is not whether popular music is the exclusive cause of youth (something no one seriously argues), but whether there is any “basis in truth” for the proposition that some popular music makes a real contribution to youth (something only the music industry denies).

The affirmative answer to this question rests on three pillars. First, media such as television and music are very powerful influences on attitudes and behavior. Second, popular music in an even more powerful influence on young people. Third, some of the most popular music today promotes destructive behavior such as violence and drug use.

Effective prescriptions require accurate diagnoses. Whether the solution involves parental involvement, public policy, pressure on recording companies or retailers to change their practices, or all of these and more, the effort must be informed by a comprehensive understanding of the problem.

TONI PARKS, GUEST LECTURER FOR THE RC HICKMAN YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHERS WORKSHOP

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 1999

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join the constituents of the 30th Congressional District of Texas, the residents of Dallas and my colleagues in the House of Representatives in taking great pleasure to proclaim July 31st, 1999 as “Toni Parks Day.”

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Toni Parks is an internationally acclaimed photographer whose works have appeared in prominent magazines and newspapers throughout the U.S. and Europe. Her pictures have appeared in Stagebill, American Visions, USIA, Life and Arts, to name a few. Toni Parks has been featured in numerous exhibitions including the Look Gallery, Tony Green Gallery in England, Columbia University, and the Martin Luther King Gallery. Her photos consist of fashion and beauty as only Toni Parks can vision. In her years as a photographer, she has received critical acclaim for her works of art.

Toni Parks will take the podium to share her experiences with the students and enthusiasts of the RC Hickman Young Photographers Workshop at the South Dallas Cultural Center, located on the corner of Robert B. Cullum and Fitzhugh. The program is presented each year by the Artist and Elaine Thornton Foundation For the Arts, Inc., a non-profit organization established to educate, promote and embrace the arts of all disciplines including drama, dance, visual, and music. Its mission is to bring about positive social awareness to the inner city community, using art as a tool for positive social change.

We salute you Toni Parks.

Therefore, I ask that all citizens of Dallas join in celebrating July 31st, 1999 as “Toni Parks Day.”

RECOGNIZING JACQUE CORTEZ

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 1999

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jacque Cortez upon her selection by Visalia-area schools as a “Good Kid.” Jacque was chosen based on her academic achievements, classroom leadership, and efforts in literature and music.

The “Good Kid” program was formed in an effort to provide students with positive reinforcement. The program allows Visalia teachers to nominate students, who have excelled in academics and demonstrated a good work ethic, for recognition in the Visalia Times Delta newspaper. Those individuals selected are mentioned in a piece featured daily in the Times Delta.

Jacque Cortez, who was nominated by her fifth grade teacher, currently attends sixth grade at Willow Glen Elementary in Visalia, California. Throughout Jacque’s years at Willow Glen, faculty and classmates alike have considered her a leader who is eager to learn and always willing to assist others.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize Jacque Cortez for being selected as a "Good Kid." I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Jacque continued success in her academic and extracurricular pursuits.

INSIGHTS ON THE PEACE PROCESS

HON. JOHN EDWARD PORTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 1999

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to enter into the record an opinion piece from the May 30th Washington Times by former Illinois Senator Chuck Percy. In this article, Senator Percy concisely points out the present status of the peace process and those steps that must occur next for progress to continue. This is a timely and insightful piece that I commend to the attention of all members.

[From Washington Times, May 30, 1999]

EMBRACING PEACE AND PROGRESS

The statement of Ehud Barak, newly elected Israeli prime minister, that he is determined to revive the Middle East peace process, to withdraw Israeli troops from Lebanon and to negotiate with Syria and the Palestinians is good news.

Mr. Barak's words are encouraging to Israelis who seek the security only peace can bring, to Palestinians whose aspirations for a place of their own can only be satisfied with the acquiescence of Israel, and to the United States, which has worked for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute for so many years.

Also encouraging is Syria's quick and affirming response expressing a willingness to resume negotiations with Israel and asking that Lebanon be included.

Apparently, Mr. Barak—once he has put together his government coalition—is prepared to take bold initiatives to break the impasse in Israeli-Palestinian relations. As an example, he might implement the Wye Agreement that requires withdrawal of Israel from 13 percent of the West Bank. This wouldn't require further negotiations because it already was agreed upon and should have been done many months ago, if the Likud government had not reneged on the deal.

It would be appropriate and wise for Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to acknowledge openly Israel's need for security by announcing and taking strong, credible new measures to suppress terrorist acts against Israel. Mr. Arafat has to do more than he has done previously.

Such moves by Mr. Barak and Mr. Arafat would begin to clear the smothering fog or acrimony and distrust left behind by Benjamin Netanyahu and would engender an atmosphere more conducive to serious negotiations.

Considering the checkered nature of the peace process up to this time, it is hard to have confidence a fresh start will succeed. But Mr. Barak comes to office with a clear mandate from his people, and the Palestinians must recognize that they now have another chance to complete the process developed in Oslo.

Mr. Barak and Mr. Arafat surely must realize the future of the region lies in peace—not stalemate, and not war. If they determine to choose a future in which their human and financial resources can be concentrated on peacetime tasks, their region can be more secure for all, and there will be an opportunity—with help from the inter-

national community—to build their economies and establish trade links between themselves and the entire world. It is still true that political relationships tend to follow the trade lanes.

In 1974, when I served as a Senate representative on the U.S. delegation to the United Nations General Assembly, I was in the hall when Mr. Arafat made his first speech there. At that time, I thought it might be possible to find the path to peace, if the leaders of Israel and the Palestinians had the courage to meet, to discuss the dimensions and details of their mutual dilemma, and to decide what risks they could afford, what concessions they could make.

Since then, much progress has been made in communications between Arabs and Israelis. From Camp David to Madrid to Oslo, the peace process became viable and promising. But always there were interruptions in the dialogue due to fears aroused on one side or the other, often by terrorist acts or unwise unilateral moves by leaders.

Nevertheless, through all the contacts over the years since Egypt's President Anwar Sadat went to Jerusalem, relationships have developed between Arabs and Israelis on many levels, including the official level. We now are at a stage where a considerable majority of Israelis support the peace process and where Mr. Arafat shows increasing sensitivity to the security concerns of Israelis.

We now are approaching the time when the largest and most difficult issues must be addressed. Mr. Barak and Mr. Arafat have a responsibility to lead and to persuade their constituencies of the necessity to make concessions for peace. They must stand strong against radical elements that will seek to undermine their efforts to settle their problems at the peace table.

After the horrors of World War II had devastated Europe, the French and Germans, traditional and bitter enemies, came together and gradually their mutual antagonisms faded and they began to enjoy the blessings of peace, security, reconstruction and economic development. And just this year, 1999, it has been announced that France and Germany have become each other's major trading partners.

This is the kind of achievement peace might bring to the peoples of Israel and the Arab world, if they take full advantage of the opportunities created by Ehud Barak.

UNLOCKING THE AVIATION TRUST FUND

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 1999

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, last week the New York Times ran an editorial by Chairman BUD SHUSTER, Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, concerning the Aviation Investment and Reform Act (AIR-21). I agree with Chairman SHUSTER 100 percent. Last year, Chairman SHUSTER unlocked the highways trust fund and ensured that highway taxes were spent on highways. Now, we are preparing to do the same thing this year with the aviation trust fund. I am proud to be a part of this effort to ensure that the taxes paid by aviation users will be spent only on aviation improvements. Unlocking the aviation trust fund will benefit the entire aviation community.

I have attached a copy of Chairman SHUSTER's editorial that I would like to call to the

attention of my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD.

[From the New York Times, July 17, 1999]
ONCE, CONSERVATIVES KNEW THE VALUE OF TRANSPORTATION
(By Bud Shuster)

Abraham Lincoln called Senator Henry Clay "my beau ideal," largely because he was dedicated to building America. Clay, whose nickname was "Capital Improvements Harry," helped pass legislation to construct roads and inland waterways to tie America together. During the Civil War, Lincoln authorized the construction of the first transcontinental railroad. Teddy Roosevelt championed the Panama Canal, and Dwight Eisenhower created the Interstate System.

Fiscally responsible Republicans, all.

Fortunately, most modern-day conservatives still believe in building America. Witness the strong support last year from conservatives at all levels of government for the Transportation Equity Act, which unlocked Eisenhower's highway trust fund and allowed it to be used for its intended purpose of improving highways and transit systems.

Unfortunately, some conservatives seem dedicated to breathing new life into Benjamin Disraeli's adage that "it is much easier to be critical than to be correct." These critics have little inclination to deal in facts or face the reality of a growing America. They know the cost of everything but the value of nothing. Some have called this "Know-Nothing Conservatism."

They criticize increased spending on transportation, but they do not differentiate between transportation trust-fund dollars and general tax dollars. They do not tell you that the trust fund receives money from an 18.3-cent-per-gallon tax on gasoline and an 8 percent surcharge on airline tickets, all of which is designated solely to pay for our country's transportation needs.

These conservative critics oppose investments by trying to discredit them. They call spending on public works in someone else's backyard a pork barrel project, but that is far from the truth. In the Transportation Equity Act, for example, only 5 percent of the money goes to Congressionally mandated projects. The rest goes to the Department of Transportation or to the states.

This year, some conservatives are once again keeping their heads buried in the sand. The House overwhelmingly passed the Aviation Investment and Reform Act last month, by a vote of 316 to 110; 87 percent of Republicans—including the Speaker and the majority leader—approved this measure.

But this didn't stop some conservative critics from immediately attacking the bill as "busting the budget" and "fiscally irresponsible."

Never mind that many Americans are furious over the decline in air service. Never mind that our antiquated air-traffic control system, which fails somewhere nearly every week, needs both reform and an infusion of capital investment.

Never mind that the National Civil Aviation Review Commission established by our Republican Congress warns that "the United States aviation system is headed toward gridlock shortly after the turn of the century" and that "it will result in a deterioration of aviation safety, harm the efficiency and growth of our domestic economy, and hurt our position in the global marketplace."

Never mind that the money in the aviation trust fund will skyrocket to \$90 billion within 10 years if we don't make the investment. Never mind that the aviation taxes would otherwise be used in smoke-and-mirrors budget gimmickry to help finance general