

do our duty. No turning back. And we must not let any group in this country say that they don't have responsibility for improved law enforcement and a lower crime rate, that they don't have a responsibility to help, that they can ignore what you know works to save lives and build a better future.

You can be very proud of the progress which has been made in the last couple of years, not just here in Washington with the crime bill, the assault weapons ban, and the Brady law but on your streets, on your streets where in place after place the crime rate is declining. But we are a long way from home.

The happiest day in the lives of people in law enforcement will be the day when we can come here and have not one single solitary heartbroken family to honor.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:49 p.m. at the West Front of the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Dewey Stokes, national president, Fraternal Order of Police, and Karen Lippe, president, Fraternal Order of Police Grand Lodge Auxiliary.

Proclamation 6800—Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week, 1995

May 15, 1995

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year, we pause to remember and to honor the brave men and women whose heartfelt commitment to the law and to their fellow citizens cost them their lives. During 1994, we lost 56 law enforcement officers to on-duty accidents. Seventy-six officers—72 State and local police and four Federal agents—were murdered. Thirty-three of these officers were wearing body armor when they were killed. All but one were killed with a firearm. Three were gunned down inside police headquarters in our Nation's capital.

America's law enforcement officers face extraordinary risks—breaking up a drug ring, apprehending a fugitive, responding to an incident of domestic violence, even making a traffic stop. Since the first recorded police

death in this country in 1794, more than 13,500 law enforcement officers have been killed in the line of duty. On average, more than 62,000 officers are assaulted and some 20,000 are injured each year.

Tragically, the dangers of law enforcement service are increasing. From 1960 to 1993, the number of violent crimes in America increased 567 percent. In the past 10 years, it increased 51 percent. During 1993, more than 1.9 million violent crimes—murders, rapes, robberies, and assaults—were reported to police. And our police responded.

Despite the rising tide of crime, good and brave men and women continue to join the ranks of law enforcement. Today, more than 600,000 sworn officers work every day to preserve the peace and improve the safety of cities and towns across America. These heroic individuals and their fallen colleagues come from many different backgrounds. But they are linked by a common faith—that freedom is worth defending and that justice shall prevail. For those who died to uphold these ideals and for those who still stand to protect them, we salute America's law enforcement officials.

The Congress, by a joint resolution approved October 1, 1962 (76 Stat. 676), has authorized and requested the President to designate May 15 of each year as "Peace Officers Memorial Day," and the week in which it falls as "Police Week," and by Public Law 103-322 (36 U.S.C. 175) has requested that the flag be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 15, 1995, as Peace Officers Memorial Day, and May 14-20, 1995, as Police Week. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this occasion with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities. I also request the Governors of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States and in all areas under its jurisdiction and control, and I invite the people of the United

States to display the flag at half-staff from their homes on that day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and nineteenth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 17.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

May 16, 1995

Budget Proposals

The President. First of all, I want to welcome the Members here for this meeting. And as you know, we're going to be discussing the budget. And we'll just make a couple of observations.

I have just returned, as you know, from my trip, and I look forward to having the opportunity to study in detail the budget resolutions passed by the Senate and the House—or offered by the Republicans in the Senate and the House.

Obviously, I believe that deficit reduction is good for our economy. It lowers interest rates. It promotes growth if it's done in the right way.

We're using 7-year figures now. The last Congress reduced the deficit about a trillion dollars over 7 years, or about as much as the Republican proposals recommend.

I am concerned, as I have said repeatedly for months now, about three things. I do not believe that we should cut Medicare deeply, cut long-term care for the elderly deeply to pay for tax cuts for upper income citizens. I believe that we have to slow the growth of Medicare. I am glad to hear the majority in Congress acknowledging that, after 2 years of denying that there is a crisis in Medicare. I agree that there is. But the proper way to do it is within the context of health care reform so that we can consider the implications

on the health of our people, the welfare of our people, as we do this.

And the third thing I would say is that we have two deficits in the country that are hurting us badly. One is the budget deficit; the other is the education deficit. The most significant thing about America in the last 15 years is the stagnant wages of working people and the growing inequality among middle class people because they do not have the skills they need to compete in the global economy. So I don't think we should cure the budget deficit by enlarging the education deficit.

Those are my three preliminary observations. And I look forward to having the chance to study this and to work with them and with the Democrats in the Congress to continue to bring this deficit down. We must do that. We all agree with that. But there's a right way and a wrong way to do it, and we're going to be discussing that in greater detail today.

Q. Senator Dodd says it may be time to drop all proposals for a tax cut right now and to focus instead on deficit reduction. Are you willing to drop your middle class tax cut proposal if the Republicans drop theirs?

The President. Well, first of all, I believe that we can pay for something in the range that I have proposed with a dramatic—[*inaudible*—deficit reduction. I think you could—I think we can achieve that. But I—I want to—that's my position, but I want to have a chance to meet with these folks today and hear from all of them, and we'll be talking more about this.

I believe that what I recommended is the right course. I'm prepared to hear from anybody else who's got any other ideas. My concern is, I don't want to see us just jump off the deep end on Medicare cuts without understanding what the implications are to pay for huge tax cuts which we plainly can't afford and which mostly go to upper income people. I do not believe that we can fix Medicare unless we have some idea of how the system is going to be reformed and what the consequences will be. And I don't believe that we should be eviscerating the education budget and making it harder for people to go to college and stay there, for example.