cause you're in the National School and Community Corps?

And that's what the Presidents and General Powell and others have come together to do here in Philadelphia at this Presidents' Summit of Service. We want to try to help guarantee that our children have a better future. And what I want to do is to challenge every young person in America to serve as a volunteer or as a full-time community service person.

Let me tell you, since AmeriCorps opened its door just 4 years ago, we've had 50,000 young people and some not so young—50,000 serve in communities the way these young AmeriCorps volunteers are today. And it's making a difference for America's future. More importantly, the average AmeriCorps volunteer helps to generate another 12 part-time volunteers who come along and help. That, too, makes America strong.

And what I asked America to do today was to support me in making it possible for many more young people to serve, like Jahi and the other AmeriCorps volunteers have done, because I found out that here in Philadelphia there's another movement going on spearheaded by a minister who's a friend of mine named Tony Campolo. He's going around to churches and saying, ''You ought to support young people the way AmeriCorps supports young people and pay for them to have living expenses so they can serve a year in community service work.''

Today I said, ''If those young people do that through their churches or their synagogues or their mosques, through their community organizations, we will make sure, number one, if they're in college and they've got a student loan, that they don't have to pay any interest on the student loan during the year that they're working and no interest builds up. And number two, if they're willing to go out and meet the same standard of hard work and long hours that the AmeriCorps volunteers meet, they will also become eligible for the scholarship.'' That could bring 50,000 more young people into the kind of community service we see with Youth Build and with the National School and Community Corps.

And finally, let me say, you know what the project was that kids were working on in the class I just visited? Every one of them was talking about how they like to serve. Every one of those young children had to say, ''I like to help. I like to do something,'' and then draw a picture of what they like to do. No one is too young to serve. No one is too old to serve.

We are the most diverse country in the world with a big democracy. We have people from all different races, all different ethnic groups, all different religions. But when we live together and work together and reach across the lines that divide us, we are the most interesting, the most powerful, the most vital country in human history. If we serve, that's the kind of country we'll be in the 21st century for all these children. That's my promise to you, and I want it to be your promise to yourselves.

God bless you, and keep it up.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:46 p.m. at the George Washington Nebinger Elementary School. In his remarks, he referred to AmeriCorps volunteers Antoine Jackson, William McBride, and Jahi Davis; and Latifah Beard, eighth grade student, George Washington Nebinger Elementary School.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Report on Cyprus

*April 25, 1997*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)*

In accordance with Public Law 95–384 (22 U.S.C. 23732(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question. The previous submission covered progress through November 30, 1996. The current submission covers the period December 1, 1996, through January 31, 1997.

As I noted to you in my last report, we have been very concerned about the decision by the Government of Cyprus to purchase the SA–10 anti-aircraft missile system and the resulting threats of a military strike by Turkey. The United States and its allies tried hard to persuade Cyprus that purchasing these missiles was a step leading away from negotiations, which remain the only way to solve the Cyprus problem. In the context of the already excessive levels of armaments on

Cyprus and last summer's intercommunal violence, the government's decision to go forward with the purchases was doubly regrettable. Additionally, I remain disappointed that the parties have not implemented alternative measures to reduce tensions along the cease-fire lines. Despite these clear setbacks, I believe the decision by Cyprus, at our urging, to defer importation of components of the SA–10 system for 16 months is a step in the right direction and provides us with a window of opportunity to make progress in resolving the Cyprus issue.

As Secretary Albright noted at her confirmation hearings, the parties need to take further steps to reduce tensions and improve the climate for negotiations. The United States remains committed to promoting a Cyprus settlement but needs the full cooperation of the parties, including Greece and Turkey, to achieve our mutual goals. We continue to see that the only way forward is direct, good faith negotiations between the parties themselves. The United States will continue to work toward bringing these negotiations about.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 29.

## Statement on Sentencing Commission Action on Penalties for Drug Offenses

*April 29, 1997*

I commend the Sentencing Commission for moving forward with recommendations to Congress to reduce the disparity between crack and powder cocaine penalties. My administration will give them very serious consideration. I have asked Director McCaffrey and Attorney General Reno to review the recommendations and to report back to me in 60 days. I look forward to working with the Congress on this issue.

In October 1995, I signed legislation disapproving the Sentencing Commission's recommendation to equalize penalties for crack and powder cocaine distribution by dramatically reducing the penalties for crack. I believe that was the wrong approach then and would be the wrong approach now.

Current law creates a substantial disparity between sentences for crack and powder cocaine. This disparity has led to a perception of unfairness and inconsistency in the Federal criminal justice system.

The sentencing laws must continue to reflect that crack cocaine is a more harmful form of cocaine. The Sentencing Commission's new recommendations do so. Trafficking in crack, and the violence it fosters, has a devastating impact on communities across America, especially inner-city communities. Any change in penalties must ensure that more dangerous offenders receive tougher sentences.

As I have stated before, however, some adjustment to the cocaine penalty structure is warranted as a matter of sound criminal justice policy. Federal prosecutors should target mid- and high-level drug traffickers, rather than low-level drug offenders. An adjustment to the penalty scheme will help ensure this allocation of resources and make our Federal efforts in fighting drugs more effective. That is why the legislation I signed directed the Sentencing Commission to undertake additional review of these issues and to report back with new recommendations.

I am also pleased that the Sentencing Commission has increased penalties for methamphetamine offenses pursuant to the legislation which I signed into law last year. This law asked the Commission to toughen penalties on this emerging drug to prevent the kind of epidemic we saw in the 1980's with cocaine use. We will carefully study these new penalties.

My administration has fought to stop drug abuse and its destructive consequences. Overall, drug use in the United States has fallen dramatically—by half in 15 years. And cocaine use has dramatically decreased since the high point in 1985—the number of current cocaine users is down by 74 percent over the last decade. While these are encouraging figures, I am fully committed to doing more to keep bringing drug use down—particularly among our children.