

working with the Congress on options for financing and increasing support for these initiatives in the future.

Only 4 of the 13 FY 1999 appropriations bills have been sent to the White House. These 13 bills must be passed to fund the operation of the Government for the fiscal year that began on October 1. Time is growing short, and I urge the Congress not to delay, but to complete its work on the remaining bills by the end of this week, and to send them to me in an acceptable form.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 7, 1998.

NOTE: H.R. 4060, approved October 7, was assigned Public Law No. 105-245.

Proclamation 7134—National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, 1998

October 7, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During the past 18 months, Americans have been stunned by gun violence among our youth, including the tragic incidents of students shooting their classmates and teachers in Jonesboro, Arkansas; Pearl, Mississippi; Paducah, Kentucky; Edinboro, Pennsylvania; and Springfield, Oregon. In communities across the country, some young people are trying to resolve their conflicts and problems by taking a gun into their schools or onto the streets—guns that, although they are generally illegal for children to possess, are still too easy to get.

While recent data indicate that the overwhelming majority of American schools are safe and that the rate of youth violence is beginning to decline, we must not relax our efforts to protect our children from such violence. Since the beginning of my Administration, we have worked hard to make our schools and communities safe places for children to learn and grow. We have put more community police in our neighborhoods, encouraged the use of curfews, school uni-

forms, and tough truancy policies, and proposed funding for after-school programs that provide children and young people with wholesome activities that keep them interested, engaged, and off the streets. We instituted a policy of zero tolerance for guns in schools that is now the law in all 50 States. We have issued a guidebook to help teachers, principals, and parents recognize the early warning signs of troubled students and intervene before despair or anger gives way to violence. Later this month, I will host the first-ever White House Conference on School Safety to focus on the causes and prevention of youth violence and to share effective strategies that we can put into practice nationwide. Through these and many other measures, we have strived to protect America's youth from being either the perpetrators or the victims of gun violence.

While government can and must be an active partner in the effort to prevent youth violence, the real key to ending the killing is in the hands of young Americans themselves. Every young person must assume personal responsibility for avoiding violent confrontation, have the strength of character to walk away from a dispute before it turns deadly, and have the courage and common sense to refuse to participate in gang activities, to use drugs, or to carry or use a gun.

As part of our nationwide observance of National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, I urge students across America to voluntarily sign a "Student Pledge Against Gun Violence" as an acknowledgment of these responsibilities. This pledge is a solemn promise by young people never to bring a gun to school, never to use a gun to settle a dispute, and to discourage their friends from using guns. By keeping this promise and giving one another the chance to grow to healthy, productive adulthood, young Americans will be taking an enormous step toward a stronger, safer future for themselves and our Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 8, 1998, as a National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence. On this day, I call

upon all Americans to commit themselves anew to helping our young people avoid violence, to setting a good example, and to restoring our schools and neighborhoods as safe havens for learning and recreation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 9.

Remarks at the League of Conservation Voters Dinner

October 7, 1998

Thank you very much for that wonderful welcome. Let me say, first of all, I want to thank Deb Callahan for her opening remarks and her leadership. I thank your chairman, Mike Hayden. I'd like to thank my EPA Administrator, Carol Browner, for being here and for the good job she does. I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to the three Members of Congress who are here tonight, without whom I could have accomplished very little over these last 6 years. Thank you, George Miller, Norm Dicks, Maurice Hinchey. Thank you for what you have done for our country.

And I'd also like to just express my appreciation to three people here—who aren't here, who have been a real inspiration to me and a constant source of support in a lot of these fights we have taken on: first and foremost, the Vice President; second, the First Lady; and third, Secretary Babbitt. They have all, in ways none of you will ever know, as well as all those you're aware of, had countless, countless conversations with me about a lot of the issues that I will mention tonight, and some I will forget.

But in an administration, the President often gets the credit when the inspiration, the ideas, the energy, and sometimes the constructive nagging comes from other peo-

ple. Now, Carol Browner, for example, constructively nagged me—[*laughter*—to make sure we stood up for clean air.

Congressman Boehlert, is that you back there? I didn't see you. Thank you, sir. [*Applause*] I'm glad to see you. Thank you very much.

But anyway, everybody said the sky was falling, and Carol said the kids need to breathe. And so we wound up doing it her way. [*Laughter*] And we're still rocking along pretty well.

And tonight I hope you'll permit me to say a very special word of appreciation to one of your honorees who is about to leave our administration, the Chair of the CEQ, Katie McGinty. Let's give her a hand. [*Applause*] Thank you.

I just was informed I missed another Member of Congress and another friend of the environment, Congresswoman Connie Morella. Where are you, Connie? There you are. Thank very much. [*Applause*] Thank you.

We've had a lot of exceedingly complex, as well as difficult—politically difficult but also intellectually complex decisions we've had to make, working out our position on climate change, on how to deal with the northwest forest challenge, on whether we could figure out a way to save Yellowstone, on figuring out the genuine equities that lay underneath the big decision on Grand Staircase Escalante. And in all of those cases, Katie McGinty has been there, working with all the various people affected and concerned, trying to make sure we did the right thing by the environment and to make sure we did it increasingly, I believe, in the right way. And I am very, very much indebted to her. I'll miss her, and we wish her well. Thank you. [*Applause*] She's actually going to India for awhile, and I told her I expect by the time I get there, there will be no longer any nuclear issues between the United States and India. [*Laughter*] If she can solve all these other problems, deal with all this other contention, this ought to be just another drop in the bucket.

Let me begin tonight where Deb Callahan left off. I agree that our job is not simply to convince people of the importance of environmental stewardship; the harder part is to