students with limited English proficiency, as well as provisions that target funds to our neediest students, increase the quality of Title I instructors, and ensure that accountability systems are workable. We have more work to do to enact a strong, comprehensive plan to hold schools accountable for results. I urge Congress to continue moving forward.

Proclamation 7243—National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, 1999

October 21, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Events of the past year have dramatically demonstrated the continuing need for a National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence. In communities across our country, we saw young lives cut short by gunfire. We watched, horrified, as the same scene played out repeatedly in classrooms, school yards, and places of worship. Out of cities like Fort Worth, Texas; Conyers, Georgia; Granada Hills, California; and Littleton, Colorado, came the images that have become painfully familiar—racing ambulances, terrified children, grieving families. As a national community, we shared a sense of devastating loss too immediate to comprehend. Behind these headlines, every day in our Nation 12 young people die as a result of gun violence.

In response to this disturbing cycle, my Administration has taken comprehensive action against youth violence. Last October, we held the first-ever White House Conference on School Safety, where I launched a new initiative to increase the number of safety officers in schools and unveiled a new plan to help schools respond to violence. After the tragedy in Littleton, we held a Summit on Youth Violence at which we launched a national campaign to end youth violence.

Earlier this month, I established the White House Council on Youth Violence to ensure the effective coordination of the many agencies and programs of the Federal Government that address youth violence issues. In addition, we have selected 54 communities to receive more than $100 million in Safe Schools/Healthy Students grants in an effort to find and fund the best ideas to reduce youth violence through community-based collaborative efforts. These funds will allow communities to implement important measures such as hiring more security personnel, installing security equipment, and improving student mental health services.

I have also called upon the Congress to do its part by passing a juvenile crime bill that closes the dangerous gun show loophole, requires child safety locks for guns, and bans the importation of large-capacity ammunition clips. I will continue to fight hard to win passage of these commonsense measures to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

As we observe this year's National Day of Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, I encourage every student in America to sign a Student Pledge Against Gun Violence, a solemn oath never to bring a gun to school and never to use a gun to settle a dispute. More than one million students signed the pledge last year, and I hope that many more will participate this year. I also urge all Americans to make their voices heard and support efforts to reduce gun violence. We need every sector of our society—families, educators, communities, businesses, religious leaders, policymakers, and members of law enforcement—to join together in this crusade to end the cycle of violence and create a brighter, safer future for our children.

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 21, 1999, 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 twenty-first day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 26.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Edward M. Kennedy

October 21, 1999

Thank you. Is this a rowdy crowd or what? [*Laughter*] You know, I'm not used to showing up and being the straight man. [*Laughter*] This is a very emotional moment for me. [*Laughter*] When I was in the 10th grade, Ted Kennedy was in the Senate. [*Laughter*] And when I retire from two terms as President, Ted Kennedy will be in the Senate. [*Laughter*] And I resent it. [*Laughter*]

I don't know what Patrick's doing here. He's supposed to be raising money for House Members. [*Laughter*] You may have cost us four seats tonight, with all this money going here. [*Laughter*] Actually, he got an excused absence from Master Gephardt to come here tonight, and I'm grateful.

Let me say a couple of words seriously. I am genuinely honored to be here. I love Edward Kennedy. And I am something of a student of the history of our country. I just—one of our guests tonight gave me a biography of Chester Arthur, because I don't own one. I've got this great—I've read all about all of our Presidents; I've studied the history of the United States Congress.

I do believe that any fair reading of that history would say that Edward Kennedy was one of the four or five most productive, ablest, greatest United States Senators that ever served this great Republic of ours.

And I am grateful for this family's commitment to public service. There is no question—I was a Governor for 12 years, and I care a lot about these issues that the States deal with. There's no question that Kathleen has done more with the job of Lieutenant Governor than any person in her position in the United States of America, and that Maryland was the first State—thanks to her—to make community service a part of the requirement of being a student in the public schools. And that is very, very important.

And you know, I said I was in the 10th grade when Ted went to the Senate. Patrick looks like he's in the 10th grade—[*laughter*]—and yet, here he is. You know, he's been here 3½ months or something in the Congress, and he's already the head of the campaign committee. [*Laughter*] So I think that there is no limit to what he can and will do in the Congress. And you already heard him say he's trying to recruit one of his brothers—I mean one of Kathleen's brothers—to run for the Congress in Illinois. So we are grateful for the service of this Senator and this family. And, you know, Vicki is my neighbor from Louisiana, so they've shown a certain affinity for Southerners. [*Laughter*]

I want you to know something else, too, that I'm grateful for. In January of 1992 Jackie came to a fundraiser for me when I was running fifth in New Hampshire, and reached out to my wife and to my daughter in ways that I will never forget. One month after, her son had also come to an event for me, when I think I was running sixth in New Hampshire. [*Laughter*] So we've had this marvelous friendship.

Sargent Shriver was, yesterday, with me when we celebrated the fifth anniversary of AmeriCorps. We've had 150,000 young people in 5 years serve their country in citizen service, earned some money to go to college. We've done a lot of things together.

But the reason that you're here, and the reason you ought to be here, is that a lot of big decisions are going to be made in the next few years. And it'll make a big difference if Ted Kennedy is in the Senate. We also have a genuine, legitimate chance to be in the congressional majority again. And that's very important.

But I said in '92 if people would vote for me, I would try to reinstitute the basic values of opportunity, responsibility, and community. I said that we would try some new ideas that would transform our country. I said in '96, ''If you'll reelect me, I'll try to build this country a bridge to the 21st century.'' I might have said, in starker terms, that this country was in tough shape in '92, and drifting and divided. A lot of people have forgotten that.

And I feel that we have sort of turned around, just like a big ship in the middle of the ocean, and we're steaming in the right