

many reasons for this progress, but police chiefs, policymakers, and citizens alike agree that the dedication of our law enforcement officers and the spread of community policing have been critical factors. Today, in cities and communities across America, residents and police officers are working in partnership, forming neighborhood watch organizations, banding together against drug dealers and gangs, and building connections that are the core of community life and the foundation of a civil society.

Unfortunately, we need look no further than the tragic losses suffered by law enforcement officers to recognize the risks that these brave men and women face every day. Last year, 50 police officers were struck down in the line of duty, and another 84 lost their lives in accidents. For these heroes, the safety of their fellow citizens was their purpose and passion, and they made the ultimate sacrifice to fulfill their duty.

We can never repay these gallant men and women for their service or adequately comfort their families. We can only honor their memory—not only in words and ceremony, but in our determination to promote justice, uphold the law, and preserve the peace and safety they helped purchase with their lives.

By a joint resolution approved October 1, 1962 (76 Stat. 676), the Congress 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. 136), has directed 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, 2000, as Peace Officers Memorial Day and May 14 through May 20, 2000, as Police Week. I call upon the people of the United States to observe these occasions with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities. I also request the Governors of the United States and of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as well as the appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag of the United States be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States

and all areas under its jurisdiction and control. I also invite all Americans to display the flag at half-staff from their homes on that day.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:05 a.m., May 12, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 15.

### **Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Chemical and Biological Weapons Defense**

*May 11, 2000*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Attached is a report to the Congress on Chemical and Biological Weapons Defense, submitted pursuant to Condition 11(F) of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the United States Senate on April 24, 1997.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; John W. Warner, chairman, and Carl Levin, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdenson, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Floyd Spence, chairman, and Ike Skelton, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services.

**Remarks in an Interview and  
Townhall Meeting on ABC's  
"Good Morning America"**

May 12, 2000

[*"Good Morning America" cohosts Charlie Gibson and Diane Sawyer welcomed program participants and described the goals of the Million Mom March against gun violence, scheduled for May 14th in Washington, DC.*]

**Charlie Gibson.** We are here in the Oval Office with the President, who is joining us this morning. It's nice to have—nice to be here. I shouldn't say nice to have you with us, since it's your office. Mr. President, good to see you again.

**The President.** Good to see you.

**Gun Safety Legislation**

**Mr. Gibson.** Diane is going to go over with the mothers, and we understand you will join us in there in a few moments. But we'd like to talk a little bit first.

It as a year ago, Mr. President, that we were here with you with the students talking about gun violence. And you talked to me then about the hopes that you had for new gun control legislation. It hasn't happened. What went wrong?

**The President.** Well, nothing went wrong. We passed legislation in the Senate—Vice President Gore cast the tie-breaking vote to require child safety locks, to ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, which would make our assault weapons ban much more effective, and to require background checks when handguns are bought at gun shows and urban flea markets, just as they are now at gun stores.

It passed in the Senate; it didn't pass in the House. And frankly, I think it was because of the intense lobbying effort against it and the longstanding ability of the NRA to influence Congressmen. I think that that was a big part of it.

I think, also, the label "gun control" is not nearly as effective as the specific safety measures. I mean, if I said to you, let's take these seatbelts out of cars and repeal the speed limits and repeal the requirement that drivers get licenses because it's "car control," you might be against it, too. When you talk about

the specifics, do they make sense or not, do they work or not, the answer is yes.

Frankly, I still don't understand why anybody would be against these things. And the evidence is clear that it works.

**Mr. Gibson.** But the Congress is jammed up. I've got here a pile of all the gun legislation that's been proposed in the past year, since we were here before, and none of it has passed. By my count, we have more States rejecting new gun control legislation than have passed it. We have 15 States that have passed prohibitions on cities suing gun manufacturers. That hardly seems like progress.

**The President.** Well, first of all, I think you have to look at the fact that the States, which our Founding Fathers thought would be the laboratories of democracy, have seen some progress. If you look at what Maryland and California and Massachusetts have done—Maryland particularly is interesting because it is not what you would think of a socially or culturally liberal State, and people from very difficult districts passed some very tough child safety legislation. I think that there has been some movement at the State level.

In Colorado, a conservative Republican Governor proposed closing the gun show loophole, couldn't pass it through the legislature, and they're going to put it on the ballot. It will be interesting to see what the people of Colorado do.

I think that as a practical matter, until the public demonstrates its will on this, there may not be more substantive progress. The people are going to have to decide what they believe the right approach is.

**Mr. Gibson.** When we were here a year ago, you gave me a rather stern talking-to about the political realities on the issue of gun control. Isn't it fair to say that the political realities right now are that nothing is going to happen for this year, while people wait to see the results of the November election?

**The President.** I'm not sure. That is one possible outcome. It may be the more likely outcome. But keep in mind, you've still got bills that have passed the House and the Senate. Essentially what's happened is—though, that this is the part about Washington that