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Children and Violence

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CHILDREN AND VIOLENCE

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PRESIDENT CLINTON'S RECORD ON VIOLENCE AND HOLLYWOOD (updated 6/2/95)

Town Hall Meeting in Billings, Montana, Thursday, June 1, 1995

Q. Mr. President, G. Gordon Liddy, the NRA and some right-wing groups are using incendiary rhetoric about federal agencies with whose policies they disagree. They seem to have forgotten the advice the political right used against protestors against the U.S. policy in Vietnam in the '60s and '70s when their answer was love it or leave it. What is your perception of the contrast between the protestors of the '60s and '70s and those of the '90s and the response of the U.S. government? Thank you.

The President. Well, first of all, there were some people in the '60s and '70s who went beyond their First Amendment rights and advocated violence. And they were wrong then, and this crowd is wrong now.

And it's very interesting to me to see that there are some public officials in our country who are only too happy to criticize the culture of violence being promoted by the media in our country or the rap lyrics that are coming out in some of our recordings -- which I have also criticized before they did, by and large -- but are stone-cold silent when these other folks are talking and making violence seem like it's okay.

And I believe, again, if we're going to create an American community where we can disagree, vote differently, work through our differences, but all think we're friends and neighbors and get closer together, we have to have a uniform standard that says violence is wrong, illegal conduct is wrong, and people that are out there encouraging people and explicitly tell them when it's okay for them to take the law into their own hands and be violent, they're wrong.

Character Education Conference, the White House, May 20, 1995

The President. If you think about -- let me mention the entertainment industry, there's been a lot said about that and I got a big standing ovation at the State of the Union from both Republican and Democratic members of Congress when I talked about the damage that comes to our society from incessant, repetitive, mindless violence coming through entertainment. There are lots of studies showing that young people tend to get numbed to violence, and to the consequences of it, from constant overexposure to it.

And I say this, not to point the finger at anybody. I have enjoyed more than my fair share of what I would call cheap thrills movies in my time. So, I am not being sanctimonious about this. I'm just saying it is an established fact that if children from very early ages are exposed to huge volumes of a certain kind of entertainment, it desensitizes them to the same sort of conduct in the real world. There's lots of evidence about that.

And that's why, frankly, I welcome the networks' recent efforts to reduce prime-time violence, and why I would applaud the decision that Time-Warner announced this week to set standards for controversial music and to balance creative expression with corporate responsibility. And I applaud the efforts of Bill Bennett, who was here yesterday, to get that done. The country owes him a debt of gratitude and we should applaud Time-Warner, as well. (Applause.)

The Children's Educational Television Act -- Television Education Act was passed back in 1990. I think there is more to do here. We need -- the broadcasters need to read that Act again and adhere to its spirit, as well as to its letters. We should be thinking twice before movies and rap music that celebrate violence against women or law enforcement officers are put out there in huge volume, in piling one on top of one another.

There is a connection, in this sense, between words and deeds. We do get dulled of that to which we are overexposed in a banalizing way.

Interview on 60 Minutes, April 23, 1995

Mr. Wallace. Final question -- do we see too much violence in movies and television in the United States?

The President. Well, I have said before, I said in my State of the Union Address, that I think we see it sometimes when it's disembodied and romanticized, when you don't deal with the consequences of it. I think -- when a movie shows violence, if it's honest and it's horrible and it's ugly and there are human consequences, then maybe that's a realistic and a decent thing to do. That movie "Boyz N the Hood," I thought, did a good job of that.

But when a movie -- when movie after movie after movie after movie sort of romanticizes violence and killing and you don't see the human consequences, you don't see the faces of the mothers and the children that I saw today, the husbands and the wives, then I think too much of it can deaden the senses of a lot of Americans. And we need to be aware of that.

But it's not just the movies showing violence. It's the words spouting violence, giving sanction to violence, telling people how to practice violence that are sweeping all across the country. People should examine the consequences of what they say and the kind of emotions they are trying to inflame.

CNN Interview, April 13, 1995

The President. Well, I would remind you that long before Senator Dole said anything about it, I actually went to Hollywood and challenged them to deglorify violence, to deglorify sexual misconduct, to deglorify drug use, to deglorify destructive behaviors, and to try to help to build this country up. I also said the same thing in the State of the Union Address. And if you'll remember, it got as strong a response as anything that we had done. I think there --

Ms. Woodruff. And you're still saying that?

The President. Absolutely. And I think there has to be -- I think what we need nobody wants to abolish the First Amendment, but people who can shape our culture have a responsibility to try to help build it up. And when they show things that are destructive, they need to be shown in a destructive light, not in a glorified light.

So if I might give you two examples, I think that one reason people liked "Forrest Gump" is they thought it reasserted American values. And it didn't hide the problems of the sixties, seventies, and eighties; in fact, it explored them, but it showed them in a sad and tragic light.

The movie "Boys N The Hood" was a violent movie, but it deglorified, it demystified gang life. No one could watch that movie and walk away from it with anything other than that children should not do these things. So there is a way for these subjects to be dealt with and to be commercially successful and still send cultural messages that bring us together and make us stronger.

1995 State of the Union

"For people in the entertainment industry in this country, we applaud your creativity and your world-wide success, and we support your freedom of expression. But you do have a responsibility to assess the impact of your work and to understand the damage that comes from the incessant, repetitive, mindless violence and irresponsible conduct that permeates our media all the time. (Applause.)"

Radio Address, December 11, 1993

"I've spoken to leaders from the religious community and the entertainment community about the obligation we all share to fight violence with values. Last week I was proud to hear that the Inner-city Broadcasting corporation of New York, which owns five radio stations throughout the country, will no longer play songs that advocate violence or show contempt for women. And I understand that two stations in Los Angeles -- KACE, owned by former Green Bay Packer Willy Davis; and KJLH, owned by Stevie Wonder -- have also adopted this policy. Whether we're ministers or moviemakers, business people or broadcasters, teachers or parents, we can all set our sons and daughters on a better path in life so they can learn and love and lead decent and productive lives."

Creative Artists Agency, December 3, 1993

But what might be entertaining to us -- a violent, thrilling movie or television program, a torrid but fundamentally amoral use and manipulation of people in what may be for us just an entertaining 30 minutes or an hour -- if it's 10 or 11 hours a day of relentless exposure into the minds of people who have never been taught to understand the consequences of their action, never had any kind of internal structure motivated and driven by seeing their parents

go to work every day and having a regular relationship with family and having other institutions, then these things can unintentionally set forth a chain reaction of even more impulsive behavior, even more inability to deal with conflict in nonviolent ways and to pass up the aggressive influences and impulses that all of us feel but most of us learn at some point in our lives not to act on. And it all gets worse if the void left by the loss of family and work and other institutions is filled by gangs and guns and drugs.

So, what I ask you for tonight is not to wear a hair shirt and say, "Mea culpa, I wish I hadn't done this, that, or the other thing," but to recognize that what may be one person's moment of entertainment, even exhilaration, the taking your mind off the pressures of the day, can, when multiplied by 1,000, have a cumulative impact that at the very least does not help to bring a whole generation of people back from the brink.

I'm telling you, if we don't find a way to deal with this, the rest of these endeavors ultimately will fail. We will not be able to make a strength out of our diversity. We will not be able to restore the ladder from poverty to the middle class that can be climbed through work and education. We will not be able to put our people back together again and use our money on education and opportunity instead of crime and jail.

So what I ask you to do is to join a partnership with me, not to stop entertaining or even titillating, not to stop frightening or thrilling the American public, but to examine what together you might do to simply face the reality that so many of our young people live with and help us as we seek to rebuild the frayed bonds of this community, as we seek to give children nonviolent ways to resolve their own frustrations, as we seek to restore some structure and some hope and some essential dignity and purpose to lives that have been dominated by chaos or worse.

We must do this. Make no mistake about it. No society, no society can prosper allowing huge pockets of people to go on forever without the opportunity to work, allowing huge pockets of children to go on without me opportunity to get a decent education, allowing huge sections of cities to be no man's lands, where the law of the automatic assault weapon controls. We cannot do well if we permit that to happen. We need every last dollar we can to invest in growth and opportunity and positive good things. And we have to use every means at our command.

Rainbow Coalition, June 13, 1992

You had a rap singer here last night named Sister SoulJah. I defend her right to express herself through music, but her comments before and after Los Angeles were filled with the kind of hatred that you do not honor today and tonight.

Just listen to this, what she said. She told the Washington Post about a month ago and I quote, "If black people kill black people every day, why not have a week and kill white people. So you're a gang member and normally kill somebody. Why not kill a white person."

Last year she said, "You can't call me or any black person anywhere in the world a racist. We don't have the power to do to white people what white people have done to us. And even if we did, we don't have that low down and dirty nature. If there are any good white people I haven't met them. Where are they?" Right here in this room. That's where they are.

I know she is a young person, but she has a big influence on a lot of people. And when people say that, if you took the words white and black and reversed them, you might think David Duke was giving that speech.

Let me tell you, we all make mistakes and sometimes we're not as sensitive as we ought to be. But we have an obligation, all of us, to call attention to prejudice wherever we see it.

A few months ago I made a mistake. I joined a friend of mine and I played golf in a country club that didn't have any African-American members. I was criticized for doing it. You know what, I was rightly criticized for doing it. I make a mistake. And I said I would never do that again.



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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SENATOR BOB DOLE
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
MAY 31, 1995

Good evening. It's good to be back in California.

Thank you, John Herrington for that kind introduction, and thank you all for being here tonight.

I want to talk with you tonight about the future of America — about issues of moral importance, matters of social consequence.

Last month, during my announcement tour, I gave voice to concerns held across this country about what is happening to our popular culture. I made what I thought was an obvious point, a point that worries countless American parents: that one of the greatest threats to American family values is the way our popular culture ridicules them. Our music, movies, television and advertising regularly push the limits of decency, bombarding our children with destructive messages of casual violence and even more casual sex. And I concluded that we must hold Hollywood and the entire entertainment industry accountable for putting profit ahead of common decency.

So here I am in California — the home of the entertainment industry and to many of the people who shape our popular culture. And I'm asking for their help. I believe our country is crying out for leaders who will call us as a people to our better nature, not to profit from our weaknesses; who will bring back our confidence in the good, not play on our fears of life's dark corners. This is true for those of us who seek public office. And it is true for those who are blessed with the talent to lead America's vaunted entertainment industry.

Actors and producers, writers and directors, people of talent around the world dream of coming to Hollywood. Because if you are the best, this is where you are. Americans were pioneers in film, and dominate world-wide competition today. The American entertainment industry is at the cutting edge of creative excellence, but also too often the leading edge of a culture becoming dangerously coarse.

I have two goals tonight. One is to make crystal clear to you the effect this industry has on America's children, in the hope that it will rise to their defense. And the other is to speak more broadly to America about the corporate executives who hide behind the lofty language of free speech in order to profit from the debasing of America.

There is often heard in Hollywood a kind of "aw shucks" response to attempts to link societal effects with causes in the culture. It's the "we just make movies people want" response. I'll take that up in a minute. But when they go to work tomorrow, when they sift through competing proposals for their time and their money, when they consider how badly they need the next job, I want the leaders of the entertainment industry to think about the influence they have on America's children.

Let there be no mistake: televisions and movie screens, boomboxes and headsets are windows on the world for our children. If you are too old, or too sophisticated, or too close to the problem, just ask a parent. What to some is art, to our children is a nightly news report on the world outside their limited experience. What to some is make believe, to them is the "real skinny" on the adult world they are so eager to experience. Kids know firsthand what they see in their families, their schools, their immediate communities. But our popular culture shapes their view of the "real world." Our children believe those paintings in celluloid are reflections of reality. But I don't recognize America in much of what I see.

My voice and the rising voices of millions of other Americans who share this view represent more than the caddy old attempt of one generation to steal the fun of another. A line has been crossed -- not just of taste, but of human dignity and decency. It is crossed every time sexual violence is given a catchy tune. When teen suicide is set to an appealing beat. When Hollywood's dream factories turn out nightmares of depravity.

You know what I mean. I mean "Natural Born Killers." "True Romance." Films that revel in mindless violence and loveless sex. I'm talking about groups like Cannibal Corpse, Geto Boys and 2 Live Crew. About a culture business that makes money from "music" extolling the pleasures of raping, torturing and mutilating women; from "songs" about killing policemen and rejecting law. The mainstreaming of deviancy must come to an end, but it will only stop when the leaders of the entertainment industry recognize and shoulder their responsibility.

Let me be clear: I am not saying that our growing social problems are entirely Hollywood's fault. They are not. People are responsible for their actions. Movies and music do not make children into murderers. But a numbing exposure to graphic violence and immorality does steal away innocence, smothering our instinct for outrage. We have reached the point where our popular culture threatens to undermine our character as a nation.

Which brings me to my second point tonight. Our freedom is precious. I have risked my life to defend it, and would do so again. We must always be proud that in America we have the freedom to speak without Big Brother's permission. Our freedom to reap the rewards of our

capitalist system has raised the standard of living around the world. The profit motive is the engine of that system, and is honorable. But those who cultivate moral confusion for profit should understand this: we will name their names and shame them as they deserve to be shamed. We will contest them for the heart and soul of every child, in every neighborhood. For we who are outraged also have the freedom to speak. If we refuse to condemn evil, it is not tolerance but surrender. And we will never surrender.

Let me be specific. One of the companies on the leading edge of coarseness and violence is Time Warner. It is a symbol of how much we have lost. In the 1930s its corporate predecessor, Warner Brothers, made a series of movies, including "G-Men," for the purpose of restoring "dignity and public confidence in the police." It made movies to help the war effort in the early 1940s. Its company slogan, put on a billboard across from the studio, was "Combining Good Citizenship with Good Picture Making."

Today Time Warner owns a company called Interscope Records which columnist John Leo called the "cultural equivalent of owning half the world's mustard gas factories." Ice-T of "Cop Killer" fame is one of Time Warner's "stars." I cannot bring myself to repeat the lyrics of some of the "music" Time Warner promotes. But our children do. There is a difference between the description of evil through art, and the marketing of evil through commerce. I would like to ask the executives of Time Warner a question: Is this what you intended to accomplish with your careers? You have sold your souls, but must you debase our nation and threaten our children, as well?

Please do not answer that you are simply responding to the market. That is not true. In the movie business, as Michael Medved points out, the most profitable films are the ones most friendly to the family. Last year, the top five grossing films were the blockbusters "The Lion King", "Forrest Gump", "True Lies", "The Santa Clause" and "The Flintstones." To put it in perspective, it has been reported that "The Lion King" made six times as much money as "Natural Born Killers."

The corporate executives who dismiss my criticism should not misunderstand. Mine is not the objection of some tiny group of zealots or an ideological fringe. From inner city mothers to suburban mothers to families in rural America -- parents are afraid, and growing angry. There once was a time when parents felt the community of adults was on their side. Now they feel surrounded by forces assaulting their children and their code of values.

This is not a partisan matter. I am a conservative Republican, but I am joined in this fight by moderates, independents and liberal Democrats. Senator Bill Bradley has spoken eloquently on this subject, as has Senator Paul Simon, who talks of our nation's "crisis of glamorized violence." And leaders of the entertainment industry are beginning to speak up, as well.

Mark Canton, the president of Universal Pictures, said, "Any smart business person can see what we must do -- make more 'PG'-rated films." He said, "Together . . . we can make the

needed changes. If we don't, this decade will be noted in the history books as the embarrassing legacy of what began as a great art form. We will be labeled, 'the decline of an empire'."

Change is possible -- in Hollywood, and across the entertainment industry. There are few national priorities more urgent. I know that good and caring people work in this industry. If they are deaf to the concerns I have raised tonight, it must be because they do not fully understand what is at stake. But we must make them understand. We must make it clear that tolerance does not mean neutrality between love and cruelty, between peace and violence, between right and wrong. Ours is not a crusade for censorship, it is a call for good citizenship.

When I announced I was running for President, I said that my mission is to rein in our government, to reconnect the powerful with the values which have made America strong and to reassert America's place as a great nation in the world. Tonight I am speaking beyond this room to some of the most powerful arbiters of our values. Tonight my challenge to the entertainment industry is to accept a calling above and beyond the bottom line -- to fulfill a duty to the society which provides its profits. Help our nation maintain the innocence of its children. Prove to us that courage and conscience are alive and well in Hollywood.

Thank you for listening to me tonight. I am grateful for the support you have shown by being here, and feel a great sense of hope and confidence that together we will succeed -- not only in this Presidential race, but in our larger mission to reaffirm the goodness and greatness of the United States of America.

Thank you very much.

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► EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE IN THE MASS MEDIA

Nearly 4 decades of research on television viewing and other media have documented the almost universal exposure of American children to high levels of media violence. Ninety-eight percent of American homes have at least one television, which is watched each week for an average of 28 hours by children between the ages of 2 and 11 and for 23 hours by teenagers. Children from low-income families are the heaviest viewers of television.

The level of violence on commercial television has remained constant during nearly two decades. In prime time there are five to six violent acts per hour; there are 20 to 25 violent acts per hour on Saturday morning children's programs. Although there is less research on cable television and VCRs, the rate of violence for MTV, for example, far exceeds that on commercial television. More graphic violence, sexual content, and mature themes are readily accessible in the 60% of homes in which cable television and VCRs are available.

There is absolutely no doubt that higher levels of viewing violence on television are correlated with increased acceptance of aggressive attitudes and increased aggressive behavior. Three major national studies—the Surgeon General's Commission report (1972), the National Institute of Mental Health Ten Year Follow-up (1982), and the report of the American Psychological Association's Committee on Media in Society (1992)—reviewed hundreds of studies to arrive at the irrefutable conclusion that viewing violence increases violence. In addition, prolonged viewing of media violence can lead to emotional desensitization toward violence.

Children's exposure to violence in the mass media, particularly at young ages, can have harmful lifelong consequences. Aggressive habits learned early in life are the foundation for later behavior. Aggressive children who have trouble in school and in relating to peers tend to watch more television; the violence they see there, in turn, reinforces their tendency toward aggression, compounding their academic and social failure. These effects are both short-term and long-lasting: A longitudinal study of boys found a significant relation between exposure to television violence at 8 years of age and antisocial acts—including serious, violent criminal offenses and spouse abuse—22 years later.

In addition to increasing violent behaviors toward others, viewing violence on television changes attitudes and behaviors toward violence in significant ways. Even those who do not themselves increase their violent behaviors are significantly affected by their viewing of violence in three ways:

- Viewing violence increases fear of becoming a victim of violence, with a resultant increase in self-protective behaviors and increased mistrust of others;
- Viewing violence increases desensitization to violence, resulting in calloused attitudes toward violence directed at others and a decreased likelihood to take action on behalf of the victim when violence occurs (behavioral apathy); and

► Social and Cultural Experiences That Affect Youth Violence

- Viewing violence increases viewers' appetites for becoming involved with violence or exposing themselves to violence.

Film and television portrayals of women in victim roles and ethnic minorities in aggressive and violent roles exacerbates violence experienced by women and ethnic minorities. The effects on aggressive behavior of video and film modeling of violent behaviors have been demonstrated consistently and conclusively in psychological literature. Although the television and film industries can be credited for showing more ethnic minorities and women in a wider range of roles in recent years, the more common portrayals of such group members remain negative. Ethnic minority group members continue to be cast as criminals, gang members, or delinquents—exhibiting aberrant or antisocial behavior. In some instances, the showing of specific films depicting ethnic minority group members in this way have been linked to episodes of violence.

In explicit depictions of sexual violence, it is the message about violence, more than the sexual nature of the materials, that appears to affect the attitudes of adolescents about rape and violence toward women. Sexual violence in the media includes explicit sexualized violence against women including rape, images of torture, murder, and mutilation as well as the nonexplicit sexual aggression shown on commercial TV and cable and on videos available for viewing at home. Films that depict women as erotically surrendering to a rapist and willingly being raped have been shown to increase men's beliefs that women desire rape and deserve sexual abuse. Male youth who view sexualized violence or depictions of rape on television or in film are more likely to display callousness toward female victims of violence, especially rape. Laboratory studies also have shown an increase in men's aggression against women after exposure to violent sexual displays. Such sexual violence is found in X- and R-rated videotapes that are widely available to teenagers.

The concept of reality and how others live is also affected by the viewing of television programming and commercials. Low-income and ethnic minority children and youth are presented with a television world often quite different from their own. The contrast between the television "haves" and their own "have

not" status can elicit strong desires in youth eager to share in the consumer products shown in programs and commercials. Furthermore, television often demonstrates how these desirable commodities can be obtained through the use of aggression and violence.

The effects of viewing violence on television can be mitigated. Children can be taught "critical viewing skills" by parents and in schools so that they learn to better interpret what they see on television. For example, children can learn to distinguish between fictional portrayals and factual presentations. In addition, children can be taught to recognize ways in which violence is portrayed unrealistically (e.g., when it is portrayed without any negative consequences). Children can also learn to think about alternatives to the violence portrayed, a strategy that is particularly effective when an adult viewing the violence with the child expresses disapproval of violence as a means of solving problems and then offers alternatives. The availability of such protective measures for some parents, however, does not absolve the film and television industries from their responsibility for reducing the level of violence portrayed on the screen.

Television can be an effective and persuasive teacher of prosocial attitudes and has the potential to make a major contribution toward reducing violence. Among the strategies that may strengthen television's positive effects are:

- Inclusion of more prosocial messages and nonviolent problem-solving in television productions;
- Compliance with laws requiring broadcasters to serve the educational and informational needs of children by providing television programs that help educate children to prevent violence;
- Restricting times when dramatized violence is shown; and
- Creating and using a meaningful rating system that is based on a program's potential for damage to the child rather than on parents' sensitivities.

VIOLENCE & YOUTH:

Psychology's Response

Volume I: Summary Report of the

American Psychological Association

Commission on Violence and Youth



AMERICAN
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ASSOCIATION

1993

PSYCHOLOGY AND YOU

Violence on Television

What do Children Learn? What Can Parents Do?



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

Violent programs on television lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch those programs.

That's the word from a 1982 report by the National Institute of Mental Health, a report that confirmed and extended an earlier study done by the Surgeon General. As a result of these and other research findings, the American Psychological Association passed a resolution in February 1985 informing broadcasters and the public of the potential dangers that viewing violence on television can have for children.

What Does the Research Show?

Psychological research has shown three major effects of seeing violence on television:

- o Children may become less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others
- o Children may be more fearful of the world around them
- o Children may be more likely to behave in aggressive or harmful ways toward others

Children who watch a lot of TV are less aroused by violent scenes than are those who only watch a little; in other words, they're less bothered or upset by violence in general, and less likely to see anything wrong with it. One example: in several studies, those who watched a violent program instead of a nonviolent one were slower to intervene or to call for help when, a little later, they saw younger children fighting or playing destructively.

Studies by George Gerbner, Ph.D., at the University of Pennsylvania, have shown that children's TV shows contain about 20 violent acts each hour and also that children who watch a lot of television are more likely to think that the world is a mean and dangerous place.

Children often behave differently after they've been watching violent programs on TV. In one study done at Pennsylvania State University, about 100 preschool children were observed both before and after watching

television; some watched cartoons that had a lot of aggressive and violent acts in them, and others watched shows that didn't have any kind of violence. The researchers noticed real differences between the kids who watched the violent shows and those who watched nonviolent ones.

"Children who watch the violent shows, even 'just funny' cartoons, were more likely to hit out at their playmates, argue, disobey class rules, leave tasks unfinished, and were less willing to wait for things than those who watched the nonviolent programs," says Aletha Huston, Ph.D., now at the University of Kansas.

Real-Life Studies

Findings from the laboratory are further supported by field studies which have shown the long-range effects of televised violence. Leonard Eron, Ph.D., and his associates at the University of Illinois, found that children who watched many hours of TV violence when they were in elementary school tended to also show a higher level of aggressive behavior when they became teenagers. By observing these youngsters until they were 30 years old, Dr. Eron found that the ones who'd watched a lot of TV when they were eight years old were more likely to be arrested and prosecuted for criminal acts as adults.

A Continuing Debate

In spite of this accumulated evidence, broadcasters and scientists continue to debate the link between viewing TV violence and children's aggressive behavior. Some broadcasters believe that there is not enough evidence to prove that TV violence is harmful. But scientists who have studied this issue say that there is a link between TV violence and aggression, and in 1992, the American Psychological Association's Task Force on Television and Society published a report that confirms this view. The report, entitled *Big World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society*, shows that the harmful effects of TV violence do exist.

What Parents Can Do

While most scientists are convinced that children can learn aggressive behavior from television, they also point out that parents have tremendous power to moderate that influence.

Because there is a great deal of violence in both adult and children's programming, just limiting the number of hours children watch TV will probably reduce the amount of aggression they see.

In addition:

Parents should watch at least one episode of the programs their children watch. That way they'll know what their children are watching and be able to talk about it with them.

When they see a violent incident, parents can discuss with their child what caused the character to act in a violent way. They should also point out that this kind of behavior is not characteristic, not the way adults usually solve their problems. They can ask their children to talk about other ways the character could have reacted, or other nonviolent solutions to the character's problem.

Parents can outright ban any programs that they find too violent or offensive. They can also restrict their children's viewing to shows that they feel are more beneficial, such as documentaries, educational shows and so on.

Parents can limit the amount of time children spend watching television, and encourage children to spend their time on sports, hobbies, or with friends; parents and kids can even draw up a list of other enjoyable activities to do instead of watching TV.

Parents can encourage their children to watch programs that demonstrate helping, caring and cooperation. Studies show that these types of programs can influence children to become more kind and considerate.

For More Information

If you're interested in reading more about the research and public issues discussed in this brochure, you may find the following books and articles helpful:

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March 4, 1994

REMARKS OF THE FIRST LADY
VIA SATELLITE TO CHILDREN NOW CONFERENCE,
VIA SATELLITE

Thank you all very much. I want to thank Dr. Kennedy and Mr. Steyer, for helping organize this conference and for inviting me to be a part of it.

It is an honor to speak to such this gathering that includes child advocates, academics, journalists, and educators, as Geoff already said. I know that many of you have traveled across the country to participate in the panels over the next few days, and I want to thank you for your willingness to tackle a subject as complicated, controversial and important as children and the news media. I'm only sorry I can't be there to join your discussions in person.

As you know so well, we live in an age of great promise -- and great peril -- for our children. While we have made considerable strides in improving the health, education, and job opportunities of our young people, our children continue to shoulder burdens never encountered by children in any other civilized society before this time.

To be sure, our children today have advantages that even those of us my age didn't know: things like computers and global information networks, in some ways a more united world, and the absence of Cold War tensions. But they also have disadvantages -- disadvantages that inject cynicism, anxiety, and fear into their young lives.

On the eve of the 21st century, American children are growing up in a world where competition for jobs is more intense than ever, where health care in our country is too costly, where college tuitions get higher and higher, and where poverty and neglect are increasing instead of decreasing.

And now, adding to those burdens, comes a plague of violence, both in reality and through the perceptions that

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are promoted by the media, that is claiming, in realistic terms, far too many lives, but is also engendering a climate of fear because of what children see and hear every day.

American children are immersed in a culture of violence. They see violence on television. They see violence in movie theaters. They see it on the streets where they live. They see it in their schools. They see it in their homes.

In too many neighborhoods, gunfire has become a daily ritual of life. An Uzi has become a badge of honor. A bullet wound has become an emblem of adulthood. Just this last week, on Monday, I was across the country, in New York, where I visited a very large hospital in Brooklyn, a hospital that treats gunshot wounds and knife wounds every hour.

And the doctors there told me that the most discouraging part of their work is that the age of the victims gets younger and younger, and that after they finish patching up a 13 or 14-year old from a gang shooting or a drive-by shooting, or a knife fight, they anticipate they will see that same young person in just a few months or years again.

In Washington, our nation's capital, a young four-year-old girl was shot in the head when young men opened fire on an elementary school playground as a crowd watched a pickup football game.

Last summer, again in Washington, gunshots rang out at a pool as children sought relief from 90-degree heat. A young mother is dragged by the side of her car during a car jacking that had the child in the car and the mother being killed trying to hang on to the car.

I could tell you many, many stories like that, but I think you know what happens every day in every neighborhood. This horrible chronicle of malicious violence goes on and on, every day and every week, every month, across the nation.

The reason we know about these tragic incidents -- the murders, the car jackings, the kidnappings, the beatings, the rapes -- is because the news media reports about them. And I'm sure that everyone in this audience today would agree that reporting about these sorts of incidents is part of the

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news media's job.

I think we all agree that the public needs to know about crime and violence. I'm sure that, to some degree, news coverage of crime has heightened public support for deterrents such as gun control. And it might also help this Administration and this President get a crime bill with real possible hope for change this year.

At the same time, we have to stop and ask ourselves some very important questions:

First, has the exhaustive -- and perhaps excessive -- coverage of violence contributed to increasing alienation and dysfunctional behavior on the part of our children and youth?

And second, does the news coverage engender so much cynicism and distrust among young people that they grow up with no faith in any of our institutions and little motivation to make something of their own lives?

These are questions I hope you will explore and that I think we must answer.

Over the past few years, a lot of attention has been paid to violence in movies and in television programming, and in the records that young people listen to. And on that score, things are beginning to improve. As the President said earlier this week, the entertainment industry has -- as a result of public concerns -- become much more involved in efforts to reduce violence in network programming. Their willingness to set up a voluntary monitoring system is a step in the right direction.

In the meantime, we're only now beginning to focus on the issue of violence and the news media, and it's a very tricky issue, given that information today comes from so many different sources -- newspapers, radio, local television, network television, television tabloids. This is an issue that must be addressed, even as we recognize that these different news media sometimes go about their jobs in different ways.

Just yesterday I read about the results of a new survey put out by the Center for Media and Public Affairs. It showed that network news coverage of murder and violence

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had doubled last year -- even though the nation's overall crime rate had remained the same.

Some of the coverage was a result of unusual cases, like the Branch Davidians, the World Trade Center bombing, the Menendez brothers' trial, the Polly Klass case, and the murders of tourists in Florida.

But what about the rest? Were the stories really newsworthy? Or were they part of a troubling pattern of sensationalism that threatens to desensitize viewers -- particularly children -- to the point where violence is considered a normal, accepted part of life?

Children Now's recent survey reports that young people are deeply affected by news stories they read or see on television. More than half the children surveyed said they felt angry or depressed after watching or reading the news. And about 60 percent of kids between the ages of 11 and 16 said the news too often conveyed negative images of young people.

The fact is that we all want to stop violence. We all want our children to experience their childhoods without being afraid, without being vulnerable, and without being insecure.

We want them to be able to be children -- to feel safe in school, to enjoy sports and recreation, to develop extracurricular interests, and to build healthy relationships.

But those kinds of positive childhood experiences seem less and less real to children who are routinely bombarded with words and pictures that seldom portray young people living that way. Saturating children with increasingly graphic and sensational stories of violence prevents them from developing the emotional and psychological tools they need to deal with violence.

One of the biggest dangers of excessive coverage of violence is that, in a child's eye, the stories validate, sometimes even glamorize, dysfunctional behavior. Violence becomes normal -- and, in an odd way, even painless. It becomes harder for a child to distinguish between fact and fiction. The latest drive-by shooting on the evening news looks a lot like the Terminator blowing his fictional enemy

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to bits on the movie screen.

The second danger of excessive coverage is that children become numbed -- or, as social scientists say, "desensitized" -- to violence. Children become so habituated to seeing and hearing about violence that shootings, beatings -- even death -- come to seem normal to them.

They develop an ironic detachment from life, a fatalism that prevents them from trusting anyone or anything. Recently I read a story about young children planning their own funerals. These children were so sure they were going to die violently that they had told their families what clothes they wanted to wear at their funerals, what music they wanted played, all with a casual detachment about what living and dying really means.

The third danger of excessive coverage of violence is that it exacerbates stereotypes. If African-American and Latino youth are usually portrayed on the news committing crimes, that stereotype is etched into the public consciousness. The same is true for women, who are often portrayed as victims.

Whether coverage of violence actually incites violent acts is one question we have to answer, and I know that researchers have debated it for years. Another equally important question is whether such coverage leaves us -- and particularly children -- with the impression that no one in our society ever does anything good or anything right.

For example, if children hear story after story about priests or clergy who molest children -- but never hear about those priests and clergy members who help children -- they are not likely to grow up trusting their churches. And yet, there are far more priests and ministers, and rabbis, in this country helping children than hurting them.

We need to ask ourselves whether some of our news coverage contributes to this lack of trust and whether it perpetuates a cynical detachment which, in turn, leads to abnormal behavior, including violence. Of course, I'm not suggesting that all news coverage of violence is bad or wrong, or that the media's treatment of violence alone accounts for our social ills. As I said earlier, the public has to be kept informed, including children.

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But I think there must be balance. Judgment must be exercised, and when it comes to children, prudence is certainly called for.

In past generations, children got most of their information about the outside world from their parents, their teachers, their church, their local youth organization, from intermediary adults. Today, children get most of their information from the media -- largely from television.

And frankly, children can't cope with much of what they see. Watching indiscriminate violence and sex does not strengthen a child's emotional, social or psychological development. Watching a daytime talk show about bestiality is neither educational nor informative to a small child -- nor, for that matter, I would argue, to an adult.

I know that journalists need to treat their subjects as objectively as they can. But I think that sometimes subjectivity, remembering what it's like to be a child, or be a parent raising children, is probably okay, too, as long as it's subjectivity grounded in values.

After all, we all rely on our personal experiences and feelings -- as mothers and fathers, as brothers and sisters, as daughters and sons -- to inform our judgments as professionals. And I think there are probably times when journalists should too, especially when it comes to children.

We shouldn't have to wait for the next national survey -- some objective, quantitative analysis -- to become aware of the fear that children feel when they are chronically exposed to violence on television, at the movie theater, or in their newspapers. Think about it. When you or I see violent images or read about violent acts taking place around us, we get scared. We get anxious. And we're supposedly adults. We could even put these events in context. Children, particularly small children, cannot.

When violence is newsworthy enough to be reported, it should be balanced with stories that provide children with positive images of themselves and those around them, particularly adults in authority. Journalists should work extremely hard to avoid exacerbating negative stereotypes. And they should work extremely hard not to contribute to what social scientists call the "mean world syndrome," where children become so self-critical that they take on the

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attributes of the negative world they see portrayed in the media.

After all, good judgment and caution, or prudence, do not violate the journalist's First Amendment rights. They do not deny the public their right to know. But good judgment and caution, and prudence do and can make a difference to children.

This is a debate that is long overdue. And perhaps we are having it now, in our country, because we are recognizing the unintended consequences of the explosion of information, the competition among news media outlets to try to get there first and be sensational enough to keep the audience looking.

We know that as we drive down a road where there is an accident, we can't help but turn our head and watch, and perhaps say to ourselves, thank goodness we're not among them. But a steady diet, every day, of that kind of sensational violence is not how any of us were raised or live our lives on a day-to-day basis.

And what we have to try to do is to create the sort of balance that we know is difficult but imperative if we expect our children to be given a fair shot at a childhood that allows them to develop emotionally and psychologically into adults that can be productive and deal with the world in all of its good and bad, in a constructive way.

Thank you all very much.

A PARTICIPANT: Mrs. Clinton, you've been kind enough to agree to stay for a while in the conversation, and I know you're used to cream-puff questions from journalists. We have five very positive role models here of young students who, in fact -- some of them are journalists -- who want to engage in a dialog with you, as well as asking some questions.

What I want -- I think you have some brief bios on them, but I'd like them each to introduce themselves and then to have them ask you a question or make an observation that might be helpful.

Luis, perhaps you could start.

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A PARTICIPANT: You want me to ask to ask the questions?

A PARTICIPANT: I want you to tell who you are. Introduce yourselves, and then we'll come back with questions.

MR. CRUZ: Okay. Hi. My name is Luis Cruz, and I'm 18 years old. I'm a freshman at the University of California, Berkeley, and I'm a reporter for Straight Talking Teens. You might have heard of us from Mrs. Gore, who was there, and so I just want to offer you an open invitation any time you're in town.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you.

MS. BROWN: Hi. My name is Shawntee Brown I'm 10 years old.

MRS. CLINTON: Great.

MS. BEHR: Hi. My name is Madeleine Behr (phonetic). I'm 11 years old. I go to Wood School in Alameda, and I'm a reporter at Children's Express.

MRS. CLINTON: Great.

MS. STRASSBERG: Hi. My name is Suzanne Strassberg (phonetic). I am 12 years old, and I attend the seventh grade at California Junior High School, and I have won several Young Authors awards.

MRS. CLINTON: Good for you.

MS. CHANG: Hello. My name is Lydia Chang (phonetic). I'm the student body president of Leland (phonetic) High School. I'm also the California State Junior Miss. I'll be representing California in the America's Junior Miss competition, and I am a correspondent for CNN's Real News for Kids.

MRS. CLINTON: Good.

A PARTICIPANT: Lydia, why don't you start with the first --

MS. CHANG: Okay. Mrs. Clinton, your talks about

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cynicism, how seeing all this violence in the news presents stereotypes, negative stereotypes of a lot of people in society, not just young people -- I'm concerned that because these images are being presented, and they're at least distorted if not inaccurate images, that adults watching the news are also garnering images that are false of young people.

And I'm really concerned about people on Capitol Hill -- legislators, Mr. President, yourself, who are all policy makers -- and if you get these images and your opinions from watching the news, then perhaps they're inaccurate. And so I'm just wondering, where do you get your information about young people? Do you get them from the news? Do you think -- does it ever occur to you that some of those portrayals might be inaccurate?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, one thing that I can tell you is that my husband and I never watch the news. We consider that part of our mental health routine, and so we don't get our images about you or anybody from watching the news. We do it from actually interacting with people.

And my husband likes to spend lots of time with young people. We have many groups of young people coming into the White House. He goes out and visits young people in schools and other settings, and I do the same as often as possible. I really like to look at people face to face. I like to hear from them, like I'm hearing from you, because I think that your point is well taken.

There is a lot of fear among adults about children, particularly teenagers, because of the constant images of teenagers being threatening, particularly young men, particularly young black and Hispanic men. And I think that it does present a distorted view and makes it very difficult for individuals to be treated fairly and given the chance to be whom they are trying to be.

So it is important that you and other young people really keep insisting that you be seen as who you are and not filtered through some media image that stereotypes you along with other young people. And we'll do our part the best we can, in Washington, to try to make it clear that most American children and teenagers are good kids. They are working as hard as they can in school or on the job. They are responsible, they don't get in trouble, and they deserve

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to be treated with respect by the rest of us.

A PARTICIPANT: Suzanne?

MS. STRASSBERG: Okay. Well, my school is sort of in an upper class neighborhood, and there was a random shooting that occurred just recently, and -- sorry -- and it was covered on every news station in Sacramento. But I've noticed that if something like a random shooting happened in a sort of poor neighborhood, it's just counted as an everyday thing, like it happens every day. And what can we do to help people realize that shootings are an everyday thing everywhere?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think that part of what we have to do is recognize that violence is no respecter of anybody, anymore. You find it throughout our country, in rural areas as well as city areas.

And one of the things that the President has tried to do in this crime bill that I mentioned in my remarks, is to put more police on the streets, to try to come up with alternative punishments, to try to get guns out of the hands of criminals -- not just the Brady Bill, which actually went into effect this week, but try to ban some of the assault weapons and other things that kids get a hold of and use against one another. So there is at least some willingness now to recognize the problem.

It's not just somebody else's problem. It affects all of us. And so I think that once we are willing to say that, then we've got a chance to fix it. As long as it was somebody else's problem, you know, it only happened to a certain kind of people who lived in certain kinds of neighborhoods -- unfortunately there were too many Americans who were willing to ignore or deny what was happening.

Now, finally, we've got a President -- and I hope a majority of congress and the majority of the country -- who want to try to help everybody stop this epidemic of violence.

MS. BEHR: The media often covers stuff about adults without health coverage, but not usually do you hear stuff about homeless kids without education or health care. Do you think this is right? And what can we do to bring the subject up to the public?

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MRS. CLINTON: Let me make sure I heard you: what can we do to make sure that people know more about homeless kids -- who are homeless and without education?

MS. BEHR: About how that affects the need for health care -- health coverage, too.

MRS. CLINTON: Right. Well, that's one of the things we're trying to do with health care reform, is to make sure that every American and every child gets health coverage. Right now, you're right, that too many children don't have health insurance, either because their parents don't work for somebody who helps provide health care, or because they're not poor enough to qualify for government health care, or because they just get lost in the system, like some of the homeless children in shelters that I have visited or seen on the streets.

Under what the President is proposing, health care will be available to every American. It will no longer matter whether you work, or where you work, or if you've been sick. Everybody will get health care. That's particularly important for children, especially children like the ones you care about, who are in terrible situations right now without health care, and they deserve to have the same kind of health care I try to give to my daughter.

A PARTICIPANT: Were you asking the question, too, Madeleine, if there was more coverage -- about children and the problems that they have with health care -- would that help to affect the public debate on health care?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I think it would.

A PARTICIPANT: And how much of the coverage seems to -- of course, you don't watch the news, so you may not be a good witness on this. (Laughter.)

MRS. CLINTON: People tell me about it, though.

A PARTICIPANT: How much of the coverage has focused on children and their need for health care?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, you know, it's -- this is slightly, I guess, off the subject, but I think it's related in that part of what we need is a consistent discussion about important issues like violence or like health care. And too

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often the news media thinks if they've done it once, then they've done it, and they've got to move on to something else, and particularly with the debate over health care.

Most Americans are only now beginning to focus on health care, so they need constant information. And it may be boring to people who follow this closely or watch the news every night, but for most of the rest of us Americans, we want to see something covered over and over again, so we really do get information.

And her point about covering what happens to children, particularly children who are falling between the cracks, that are not getting health care, is something that I think we should have a lot of coverage about, because we are paying a very high price in both money terms and human terms because we don't take care of our children and give them decent health care.

A PARTICIPANT: Shontee, I know that much of what the First Lady said in her opening remarks about violence on television is part of what has concerned you. Do you want to maybe talk a little about your own feelings as well as asking her a question about it.

MS. BROWN: Okay. The way that I feel about violence, that kids -- kids of color is being portrayed by the media because if -- because if you go to (inaudible) to shoot -- to shoot up somebody, they won't -- they won't put that on the news. They'll put a white kid going on a rampage (inaudible) just shooting everybody. I think they -- the media -- is just judging on whites instead of blacks.

MRS. CLINTON: You know I think that the concerns that you express are ones that I really share with you, because we've got to get, in our country, to a point where we see individuals as individuals, not as members of groups. If someone does something wrong, that individual should be punished, and that individual should be held accountable.

But whether a person is black or white, that doesn't make any comment on everybody else who is black or white. We ought to just look at the individual behavior and try as hard as we can to eliminate, you know, racial and ethnic, and other kinds of stereotypes. And the news media needs to help us do that as best it can, because it has such influence over how people see the world. And I think you're

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right to be concerned.

A PARTICIPANT: Luis?

MR. CRUZ: Mrs. Clinton, I've noticed that there aren't too many good stories in the media about public education. How do you feel about that, and how do you feel about the fact that you seem to contribute to this perception by sending your kid to -- your daughter to a private school?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think that's a fair question, because all during the time that we lived in Arkansas, when my husband was the governor there, Chelsea always attended public school. And we worked very hard and believed very strongly in public school. And if her father were still the governor of Arkansas, or were not the President of the United States, she would still be in public school.

But we have, unfortunately, some special considerations having to do with security and some other things, that I wish we didn't have. I mean, I wish that we could still live like former presidents lived, who could walk out their front door and go for a walk, who didn't have to be surrounded by secret service people all the time, who didn't have to have their daughter surrounded by secret service.

But the world we're living in doesn't permit us to do that. So we had to make a decision based as parents because of her father's position. But I don't think you'll find any two people more committed to public education than we are, because it works. Again, here is an unfair characterization.

Most public education works for most kids. It doesn't work for every student, and we need to do better. But it is unfair to dismiss public education the way too many people do, when it is working. And you are a result, other people are a result of good public schools, and I think we ought to celebrate the successes.

We try to do something most other countries don't try to do, to educate all of our kids, no matter what language they speak, no matter what background they come from. And we ought to be proud of that.

A PARTICIPANT: If you have a couple of more

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minutes, I'd love to follow up with the students' feelings about some of the points you raised in your comments and maybe give you a chance to ask a question or two of them, if you'd like to.

MRS. CLINTON: They're telling, me, Geoff, that I've got about three or four more minutes, so I'd be glad to.

A PARTICIPANT: Okay. Madeleine, you told a story this morning about your father and television news, that I think might be interesting for the First Lady to hear.

MS. BEHR: Well, at my household my parents sometimes watch the news. We don't -- we don't watch it, like, daily, every night, but my dad usually doesn't like me watching the news because he knows that almost 100 of the things on it is violence, and he doesn't want me to go to sleep with bad nightmares, that I'm going to be kidnapped right out of my household or something like that. So he doesn't -- he doesn't really like me watching the news.

MRS. CLINTON: I can understand that. You know, one of the things that the news media cannot really deal with is the range of its audience -- who turns on the TV, who sits in front of it. But it is very clear to anyone who has studied it that children of a certain age and below take very literally what they see on the news. And there are just countless stories of children becoming very anxious and concerned about what they see, and thinking it was going to happen to them.

And it used to be possible, in previous times, and certainly before television was as pervasive as it is, to protect children of a certain age from that kind of information. You know, children -- when you're growing up, you have a lot of work to do. I mean, you know, babies have to learn to walk and talk, and then you've got to learn about how you write and you read, and you've got to figure out how the world works around you, like how you relate to the people in your family and everything.

I mean, I think a lot of adults forget what hard work it is to be growing up and to deal with the problems any child has to deal with. If you add on top of that a steady diet of violence that makes children feel frightened and scared, and anxious, it makes it more difficult for them to deal with what they have to do just as a daily part of

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growing up. Then you are interfering with what is or should be a kind of positive development in children's lives.

So I think your father and mother make a very good decision to try to at least act like the adults in your life, and protect you from being unnecessarily exposed to stuff that you can do nothing about, and that which only can make you anxious and block out your doing other things you should be doing and thinking about. So that's one of the problems we've got.

I mean, how do we let children be children, and grow up to be able to cope with all these things? If you get a steady diet of it too soon, it's like eating too much of anything. You get indigestion, and it interferes with your being able to deal with other problems. And I think that's happening with too many of our children.

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CHILDREN AND VIOLENCE



Children's Defense Fund

Children are under siege in this nation. One child dies every 98 minutes from gunshot injuries. At the same time, Congress is looking both (i) to defund initiatives designed to give children opportunities for positive youth development and (ii) to roll back the incremental progress made in restricting the availability of military weapons, i.e., to repeal the ban on semi-automatic assault weapons enacted as part of last year's omnibus anti-crime law.

- ♦ In 1992 (the most recent year for which data are available), 5379 American children and adolescents ages one through 19 died from gunshot injuries: 3351 died from gun homicides; 1426 died from gun suicides; and 500 died from gun accidents.
- ♦ According to the 1992 data, one child dies from gunshot injuries every 98 minutes. In 1989, by comparison, one American child died from gunshot injuries every two hours.
- ♦ According to a newly-released CDC study, the murder rate for teenage boys ages 15-19 more than doubled between 1985 and 1991 (rising from 12.95/100,000 to 32.97/100,000); for Black males in the same age group the murder rate nearly tripled (rising from 46.18/100,000 to 124.23/100,000). **Virtually all** of this increase (97 percent) was attributable to guns.
- ♦ Young people are using firearms to settle their grievances as never before. According to FBI data, the number of juveniles arrested for murder increased by 127.9 percent between 1984 and 1993, while the number of adults arrested for murder increased by just under 13 percent. Arrests of juveniles for weapons violations (possessing, carrying, etc.) increased by 125.6 percent between 1984 and 1993; by contrast the number of corresponding adult arrests increased by 32.1 percent.
- ♦ However, only 19 percent of the increase in violent crimes between 1983 and 1992 was attributable to juveniles.
- ♦ The National Education Association reports that, every day in the United States, 40 children are killed or injured by guns.
- ♦ Since 1988, teenage boys in the United States generally have been more likely to die from gunshot wounds than from all natural causes combined, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.
- ♦ In a mere three years – between 1987 and 1990 – gunshot wounds among children ages 16 and under in urban areas nearly doubled, according to the National Pediatric Trauma Registry.
- ♦ The Harlem Hospital in New York reports that the majority of children admitted with gunshot wounds already have lost a family member to a fatal, gun-related injury.

- ◆ A study in The New England Journal of Medicine found that young men in Harlem are less likely to live to age 40 than their counterparts in Bangladesh.
- ◆ During a six-month period in 1988-1989, more than 400,000 students were victims of violent crime at school. A 1990 survey of students at 31 Illinois high schools revealed that one in 20 students had carried a gun to school. California schools reported a 200 percent increase in gun confiscations from students between 1986 and 1990. In a 1987 survey of high school students, 48 percent of tenth-grade boys and 34 percent of eighth-grade boys said they could get a handgun if they wanted one.
- ◆ In New York City, arrests on gun charges increased by 75 percent between 1987 and 1990 for youngsters ages seven to 15.
- ◆ A recent Northeastern University study found that arrests for murder of boys 12 years of age and under doubled between 1985 and 1991.
- ◆ Violent acts are the daily fare of millions of American children who watch television an average of 21 hours per week. TV Guide reports a violent incident is shown, on average, every six minutes.
- ◆ The United States spends at least one billion dollars annually on hospital costs associated with the treatment of individuals who have been shot and who, frequently, have no health insurance.
- ◆ According to the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, in 1990, handguns were used to murder 13 people in Sweden, 91 people in Switzerland, 87 people in Japan, 68 people in Canada, 22 people in people in Great Britain, and 10 people in Australia. By comparison, handguns were used to murder 10,567 people in the United States.

CRIME PREVENTION AND THE 1994 CRIME BILL

One of the major differences between the 1994 crime bill and past anti-crime measures is an increased emphasis on crime prevention efforts that target our youth. The bill will increase prevention programs by about \$7 billion -- an substantial increase from what we currently spend -- and provide, for the first-time, a cabinet-level coordinating mechanism for the implementation of these programs.

Why spend so much money on prevention programs? It's simple. While some in Washington have played politics with prevention programs -- fueling the dead-end "prevention vs. punishment" debate -- youth crime has risen dramatically. Prevention by itself is not the answer, but it's a crucial part of a comprehensive attack on youth crime.

HERE ARE THE SAD FACTS:

- **Youth violence has skyrocketed...** Over the past 10 years, the number of minors arrested for murder has soared more than 128%, and arrests for violent crimes overall have gone up 57%. In fact, a recent Northeastern University study indicates that almost all of the increase in criminal homicides in our big cities is attributable to the increased number of homicides committed by youth.
- **...as has the number of young victims.** Kids today are 2 1/2 times more likely than adults to be victims of violent crimes, and firearms kill more people between the ages 15 and 24 than all natural causes combined -- 14 children every day. Given these odds, the Center for Disease Control has rated youth violence as the nation's #1 health problem.
- **More kids are "packing" guns...** Since 1988, the number of kids arrested for illegally carrying or possessing a handgun has jumped by 66%. In total, some 35,000 kids are arrested on weapons charges -- that's about one fifth of all arrests on weapons charges:
- **...and finding themselves staring down the barrel of a gun.** The number of kids murdered with guns has increased 79% since 1980. Playground disputes that once resulted in black eyes or bloody noses now end in gunfire. Today's neighborhood bully isn't the biggest kid on the block, but the one most likely to pull the trigger on his gun.
- **Our social institutions are growing weaker...** More and more kids from our poorest, hard-hit neighborhoods are growing up without the benefit of strong families, with little or no education and without the prospect of a decent job. Since 1950, the divorce rate has more than doubled, the number of children having to cope with divorce have more than tripled, and 3 times more children are being raised in single-parent families.

- **...but gangs are growing stronger and stronger.** In such an environment, gangs provide misguided youth with what they want most -- a sense of direction and belonging. That's why gangs and gang violence are now a problem in all of our nation's large cities and in an overwhelming percentage of smaller cities, too.
- **Even our schools have become less safe...** Nearly 3 million thefts and violent crimes occur on or near school campuses every year -- or about 16,000 incidents per school day, one every 6 seconds.
- **...and kids are spending less time there.** The number of high school sophomores participating in school-sponsored extracurricular activities has generally declined since 1980. Fewer kids are joining hobby and vocational clubs, participating in sports and cheerleading, and singing with the chorus or playing in the marching band.
- **And illegal drugs are making a comeback.** We already know that gangs, guns and drugs are problems that go hand in hand. But set against the backdrop of increased use and tolerance of illegal drugs by our 8th, 10th and 12th graders, we can be sure that youth violence is only going to get worse before it gets better.

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO YOUTH CRIME

The 1994 Crime Bill took a tough -- but smart -- approach to youth crime. Here's what the new law does:

- **Gets tough on hardened young criminals.** A relatively small number of young criminals commit a disproportionate number of violent crimes. Studies indicate that between 52% and 61% of serious youth crime can be attributed to 6 to 7.5% of all juveniles -- many of whom are in gangs. To deal with these hardened criminals the crime bill facilitates gang prosecutions, increases penalties and gives federal prosecutors the discretion to try 13-year olds as adults.
- **Keeps guns out of the hands of young people.** Since guns play an increasing role in youth crime, we must do more to keep them out of the hands of troubled youth. For this reason, the crime bill bans the 19 deadliest assault weapons (and copies) and, with certain exceptions, prohibits handguns from being possessed by or transferred to juveniles.
- **Turns young, non-violent offenders around.** The crime bill also includes billions of dollars to expand the use of community boot camps and drug courts to provide young offenders with the discipline, training and drug treatment and education to prevent them from embarking on a life of crime. By expanding the use of these alternative sentences, we can make sure that young offenders receive some form of punishment the first time they run into the law, not after having repeatedly gone through the revolving door of unrestricted probation.

- **Works to prevent crime from happening in the first place.** But as we tell our youth to say "no" to gangs, guns and drugs -- and appropriately punish those who break the rules -- we must give our kids something to positive to say "yes" to -- and prevent them from turning to a life of crime in the first place. Just as tough punishments for hardened young criminals are meaningless unless they are carried out, so too is a positive prevention message that isn't coupled with real opportunity -- and that means putting real money into wide array of prevention programs.

CRIME PREVENTION IS KEY

In total, the crime bill contains nearly \$7 billion over the next five years for a multitude of prevention programs, including: the Community Schools and FACES program, which will help make schools centers of community life; crime prevention block grants, which give localities the opportunity to fund a broad range of prevention programs in hard-hit areas; the Ounce of Prevention Council, which funds after school programs and creates the first ever cabinet-level council to oversee and evaluate the federal government's prevention activities; and other similar initiatives.

A STUDY OF SCHOOL-ASSOCIATED VIOLENT DEATHS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1992 -1994

Executive Summary

April 8, 1995

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is today releasing this advance executive summary of its study of school-associated violent deaths. According to the CDC, this is the first attempt to gather national information on school-associated deaths as there is no national reporting system for such incidents. The data being made available today indicate that the problem of violence in schools is much more serious and potentially life-threatening than previously believed. These findings highlight the extent to which violence in communities has crept into schools, once viewed by parents as "safe havens" for children.

The key findings of the Study include:

- o The CDC has identified 105 violent, school-associated deaths in the last two school years (1992-3 and 1993-4) across the country.
- o Twenty-nine (28%) of the fatal injuries happened inside a school building, another thirty-seven (36%) occurred outdoors on school property, and the remaining thirty-six (35%) occurred off campus
- o These deaths included 84 homicides, 18 suicides and 3 unintentional firearm-related deaths
- o 65.3% of the victims were students and 11% were teachers or staff. The remaining victims (23%) were community members killed on school property

While the study is still underway, early findings suggest that violent deaths can occur in schools and communities of all types and sizes.

As researchers continue to analyze the data collected for this study, they hope to identify risk factors for school-associated violent death and ultimately prevent other fatalities. Violence has long been recognized as an important public health and social issue, especially for young people. This study underscores the degree to which violence has crept into students' lives and into their schools. The result is students who are so frightened by the possibility of violence, they feel compelled to find new and "safer" routes to school and home again, or to avoid school altogether. Others feel the need to carry a weapon for protection, unaware that this will put them at greater risk.

The 105 deaths are, of course, only the most startling example of the growing epidemic of school violence. A full report on this study is expected in early 1996. The study was conducted by the CDC, in conjunction with the United States Departments of Education and Justice and the National School Safety Center.

THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

For Immediate Release

August 15, 1994

REMARKS BY FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
TO THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON YOUTH VIOLENCE
WASHINGTON, DC

Thank you so much, and thank you Secretary Riley, we have been friends and allies for many years and I am so grateful for his leadership on behalf of education for our entire country. I want to thank my friend Deborah Prothrow-Stith who years ago first taught me that violence is a public health epidemic. She made it very clear that if we had a disease in our country that was killing 65 people a day, this country would be mobilized. We would not rest until we had figured out how to stamp out that epidemic. Particularly when it was including in its death 7 young people a day. And now we know there is an epidemic of violence and yet there are still some among us who either refuse to accept the ravages of that epidemic or have other agendas besides the saving of lives and the reforming of people's futures. And it is imperative that conferences like this including people like all youth around this country speak out loudly and clearly to what your elected representatives know that on this issue as with many others, when it comes to violence enough is enough and America wants action now.

I want to especially thank all the cities that sent teens here to this conference. Because each of you have made a step as Secretary says starting with the first conference last year, of recognizing the problem that violence particularly youth violence poses to our society. We know we have to form partnerships among all different kinds of people in every community and we have to have partnerships at the local, state, and federal level in order to combat the ravages of violence. But I particularly want to thank the young people who are here and I want to thank Lucretia for that welcome when I came and sat down. I love that enthusiasm, I love the sound of young voices speaking out on what they care about. Truly your being here and your being willing to commit yourselves to finding solutions is very significant. And I am grateful for your accepting this responsibility.

This conference as those of you who are participants know, is about possibility and also about success. And is about never, never, giving up. I often give commencement speeches and I've heard many and I'm sure all of you in this room have. But the

favorite I've ever heard about was the one Winston Churchill gave at his prep school when he strode to the podium and with very few introductory words said, "Never, never, never give up." That is the way I feel about many of the issues facing our country today. And it is also the way I feel about every single young person in our country today. Every young man or woman, every boy or girl, has a God given potential that we at our herald give up on. And it is incumbent upon us, as representatives of the adult community of this society, to recommit ourselves to youth. The young people who are here are pledging to you, "If you don't give up on yourself, we will not give up on you."

We also have to admit it is a lot harder in many ways growing up today than it was when most of us of a certain age in this room were coming up. It is much harder. I can remember times when kids in my neighborhood would take on kids from another neighborhood. I probably shouldn't say this you'll hear more stories about my life. But I can remember and since I was kind of a tomboy I was often involved in some of those discussions that would occur. But that's what they mostly were they were discussions when we thought up the worst things we could call each other. Occasionally there be fists thrown and people rolling on the ground. Not me I was standing there trying to say, "Now, boys, now boys." For most of us of a certain age we can remember it happening. But you know, the occasional black eye, the occasional hurtful word, the occasional pushing and shoving that went on, I just thank God that given the strong emotions that accompany growing up no matter who you are or where you grow up we did not have guns, we did not have assault weapons, so when tempers got hot the most we could do to one another is yell and scream and push and shove and occasionally throw a punch.

Think of what it is like today where the young people in this room and the millions others like them are immersed in a culture of violence. A culture that in so many ways glorifies violence. We see it everyday on television, we see it in our movies, but worst of all we see it every single day on the streets and neighborhoods where children are trying to grow up. Where many, too many in effect are raising themselves. In too many neighborhoods gunfire is a daily ritual of life, and uzi is a badge of honor, instead of a mark of cowardice, which it truly is. A bullet wound is an emblem of adulthood. As I've traveled from hospital to hospital in the last year and a half, and I've gone into emergency rooms, what I heard over and over again is that the epidemic Deborah warned us about is now raging in so many of our communities. It is different when you see thirteen and fourteen year-olds brought in with bullet wounds. It is different still when they are brought in not with one bullet, but multiple bullets from assault weapon. It is different still when the techniques of medicine cannot even keep up with the carnage that is daily brought through the doors of your emergency rooms.

You go to any emergency room in a medium size city, let alone a large city in our country, and you talk to the doctors and the nurses there as I have. If you do not believe violence is an epidemic, you will become quickly convinced as they tell you the stories of struggling to save thirteen and fourteen year old lives. Sometimes saving those lives only to send those young men out on the street knowing they are likely to be back in that emergency room in a relatively short period of time.

We see it everyday as we pick up our newspapers. I picked up a newspaper here in Washington today and read about another thirteen year old gunned down on the street corner. In Washington last summer, gun shots were fired at a public swimming pool packed with children trying to escape the 90 degree heat. A few months ago, a four-year old girl was fatally shot in the head when groups of youngsters opened fire on an elementary school playground. And during the past week a one year-old was grazed by a bullet from a gunfight. That thirteen year-old who died, it appears his killer is also thirteen years-old. What does it say about a society that has graduated from taunts and yells and thrown punches and raised fists--, that all of us remember from school yard fights, neighborhood fights in the past. To thirteen year-olds being gunned down on street corners, a four year olds being killed on playgrounds, and one year olds being grazed by bullets.

Over and over we see that children are not only the victims of violence but all too frequently the perpetrators. In the 1980's more than 11,000 people died as a result of homicide committed by high school age young people. Gunfire and drive by shootings and violence have become so common place that many people don't even notice it or talk about it anymore. In matter of fact ways children tell you they're not sure they will live to finish high school. It is not only the academic challenges they confront, it's the challenges to their physical safety. There is as you know, no simple answer to this epidemic of youth violence. That's why we brought federal agencies together to try to fulfill the President's pledge to begin at least to address this problem. That's why we need a comprehensive strategy that emphasizes responsibility and opportunity and community. It's why we need all the other pieces of security that the President is working on. It is important to do things like health reform, so that every young person has a good healthy start in life. It is important to do welfare reform so that we once again reward independence and self-sufficiency. It's important to have job training programs and life-long learning and the legislation that Secretary Riley shepherded through to the Congress that will make an enormous difference in how young people learn and what they learn and what they're prepared to do once they finish school.

It is also right, it is absolutely critical, that this country not walk away again from dealing with crime, as it has so

many times in the past and did again last week. You know, the crime bill has been around for 6 years. The average criminal serves four years in jail. There's been a lot of tough talk about crime going back a lot of years. All kinds of rhetoric. Mostly hot air not connected to doing anything positive, to reaching out a helping hand, to make stricter and surer, neither smart nor tough, but boy a lot of talk. We're seeing it again because some people unfortunately would rather practice their own brand of partisan politics or personal advantage than to deal with the problems that are right before their eyes. Those who voted against the crime bill were willing to sacrifice all the achievements represented at this conference. Those who voted against the bill weren't listening to the voices of young people who are with us today or were with us last year. They can testify the importance of recreational facilities, education programs, family support services, and other preventive measures that nurture hope and possibility in our young people. Those who voted against that bill last week don't seem to care that our children cannot feel safe at school. A recent survey showed that fifteen percent of school children believe there are gangs in their school. Almost one in ten of students in high school reported that in the previous month they had been in at least one serious physical fight. Those who voted against the bill don't seem to care that this pattern goes on and on just as it has for the past six years, when time after time, Congress caved in to the pressures of special interest, instead of making this legislation law.

The crime bill is not perfect; no piece of legislation is. I bet every one of us would have written it slightly differently, we would have added or taken out according to what we thought was best. It is a critical, important, and necessary start. And it is for the first time a piece of legislation that lays down the twin principles of fighting crime, punishment and prevention. It is clear that we face a choice, the President and I were in church yesterday we heard a great sermon, and one of the lines from it that I will always remember is when the preacher said, "You know you can make a choice in your life, but you can't pick the consequences." I think about that a lot because every day we make choices, but we cannot be told the consequences that swell from those choices. So what are the consequences of turning down the crime bill? Well, the consequences are that once again we would have turned our backs on the problems you are hearing discussed. Once again we will have substituted rhetoric for reality. Once again we will have seen in-action triumph over action. Now we can focus on all the things we want to change, or we can say, this is a mission we are on and this is where it starts to try to begin to deal with the epidemic of violence.

Let's look at some of these pieces of this crime bill that are so important. Things like YES, Y-E-S, Youth Employment Skills program. I think it's important to focus on young people

in high unemployment areas to give them the skills they need to be able to find jobs. I think that's a goal for society and I know it will help to prevent crime. I wish the folks on Capitol Hill would agree. Things like the Community Schools Program, that will give grants to community groups to keep schools open after hours and on weekends and during the summer so that kids can have a place to go and stay out of trouble. Safe places where they can engage in learning and recreation, where there can be adult mentors and coaches. We know from the examples of such schools around our country that if schools are transformed into safe havens for youngsters, children will be safer. I'm not sure what the folks in Congress who were voting against the crime bill think we can do with our children after school when it takes both parents in a home working or when it takes a single parent working and they then live in fear about what happens to their children on the streets between the time school is over and the time they get home for dinner. I want children to have safe havens and the crime bill would be a good start to that. Programs like the Gang Resistance Education And Training Program called, G.R.E.A.T., already a proven success. I've been in a lot of neighborhoods, places where many of you come from and you know you fight a losing battle year in and year out to try to convince young people not to join gangs. Why? Because the gangs provide a, "haven", not safe but a haven. It provides a family if you will. It provides a network of people who say they will look out for each other. It fills a vacuum in the lives of thousands and thousands of youngsters. Now wouldn't it be better if we had a positive alternative a program like GREAT where youngsters can be safe in coming together and working together and learn how to resist the faults and in many ways dangerous, seductive pleasures that the gang propose in the short run which leads to death and misery for so many children. I think we should vote for gang resistance programs instead of letting more and more children end up in the gangs.

Look how programs like Police Partnerships for Children, programs where police officers will take their time to work with young people, coupling that with community policing where we again get police officers on the street. Somebody that a young person can hopefully find some support from, but if we turn on our back on these partnerships that police are offering, we lose an opportunity to transform our police officers not only into instruments of punishment but also instruments of prevention. And if we also turn our back on this crime bill we walk away from one of the most important advances on behalf of women, the Violence Against Women Act. It is time we stood up and said women should not be victimized, whether it is in the home, or on the street and we need to give our law enforcement officials the tools to protect women. It has gone on long enough, ignoring and denying the depth of the problem of violence against women this crime bill begins to turn that around. And that's another reason.

Now if you've heard all of this prevention, and I've only touched the tip of the old prevention iceberg that is in that crime bill, with the other elements: a hundred thousand more police on the streets, a ban on handgun ownership for minors. A ban on assault weapons that only lead to death and injury. A three strikes and you're out bill so that violent offenders can be taken off the street. And I see these young men clapping wildly because they know what happens in their neighborhoods. You take all of that and it adds up to a well-balanced reasonable approach that mixes both prevention and punishment. An approach that has been worked out and struggled over with lots of input from people from the grassroots level.

Those of you participating in this conference know first hand what it will take in your own hometowns to combat violence. You also know that even though a crime bill is a critical step in putting this society on the right track for combating violence it alone can't do the job either. It's not a panacea. If the President signs that crime bill it's not going to solve all of our problems. It's not going to keep families together, it's not going to get adults to give children the type of supervision, love, discipline, and attention little children need. It's not going to instill a sense of faith and responsibility in the souls of young people who have been damaged and alienated, it's not going to do those things. It is going to begin to put into place people and institutions and programs that can help lead to those outcomes. It can give people a chance once again to feel they are a part of something bigger than themselves. And to lay a line very clearly that despite all the tough talk about crime in the last decade has become obscure, and that line is, you have to know the difference between right and wrong and we're going to hold you responsible for the choices and the consequences of those choices. It begins to once again fight the violence in society. This whole crime debate, the whole issue of youth violence, is an indication of something much deeper and more profound. It is an indication of literally millions of Americans walking away from their responsibilities. And that is what we're ultimately trying to reverse. We are trying again, against tremendous odds to say the individual is responsible for his or her actions. But society is also responsible for individuals. It is not an either or, it's not a liberal and conservative, that old stuff is so out of date. That is like beyond talking about. Some people think they can answer every problem by saying, "Oh that's liberal. Oh, that's conservative." Or maybe they step further on down the road of meaningless analysis and say, "Oh, that's republican. Oh, that's democrat." An assault weapon doesn't care what political party you are. An assault weapon in a drive by shooting doesn't even care if you're a member of the National Rifle Association.

Let's just stop for a minute and ask ourselves, "Haven't we wasted enough lives, haven't we lost enough young men and women

to prison instead of college? Haven't we turned our back too many times on the God given potential of every one of our young people?" I don't care what race they are, I don't care where they live, every single young person in this country, has a spark about them that we have for too long allowed to be extinguished by a level of violence, hatred, and divisiveness that still stalks this country. We can do much better than that, all you have to do is look at the faces of the young people around you today. We know we can do better. But we cannot unless we stand up and are willing to be counted. I hope you will not only attend this conference, I hope you will not only work on what needs to be done back in your own hometowns, I hope you will take the time to let your member of Congress know why you are here, what you stand for. And I hope you will say it may not be perfect, but this crime bill represents a huge first step in staking out new territories in this country. Once and for all we're going to be both smart and tough. We're going to begin to save a generation of young people from this epidemic of violence. Thank you all.

END

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Christian Coalition

Divider Title: _____

CHRISTIAN COALITION

- Outline of the "Contract with the American Family"
- Talking points on the Contract
- Excerpt from McCurry press briefing, 5/18/95
- "Hypocritical About Divorce," 5/23/95



EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1995
10:00 A.M.

CONTACT: MIKE RUSSELL
804-424-2630

CONTRACT WITH THE AMERICAN FAMILY

RELIGIOUS EQUALITY: Passage of the Religious Equality Amendment to protect the religious liberties of Americans in public places.

The amendment would not restore compulsory, sectarian prayer or Bible-reading dictated by government officials. We seek a balanced approach that allows voluntary, student- and citizen-initiated free speech in non-compulsory settings such as courthouse lawns, high school graduation ceremonies, and sports events.

LOCAL CONTROL OF EDUCATION: Transfer funding of the federal Department of Education to families and local school boards.

Return greater power and control over education to parents and local communities. This reform begins by transferring funds for the U.S. Department of Education to families and local school boards to administer as they see fit. Reform should include repealing Goals 2000.

SCHOOL CHOICE: Enactment of legislation that will enhance parents' choice of schools for their children.

S. 618, the Coats-Lieberman Low-Income School Choice Demonstration Act, establishes 20 demonstration projects providing assistance to help low-income parents send their children to public or private schools of their choice. We urge swift passage of school choice legislation.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY TAX POLICY: Reduce the tax burden on the American family, eliminate the marriage penalty, and pass the Mothers and Homemakers Rights Act.

1. Christian Coalition favors the \$500 tax credit for children awaiting action in the Senate. We also support in concept a flat or flattened tax (with generous personal exemptions for children) as an ultimate goal.

2. H.R. 1215 makes married couples eligible for a tax rebate of up to \$145 if their tax liability goes up as a result of being married. The Senate should pass this legislation to encourage marriage and ease the burden on families.

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3. The Mothers and Homemakers Rights Act will allow homemakers to contribute up to \$2,000 annually toward an IRA, thereby providing equitable treatment to spouses who work at home. S. 287, sponsored by Sens. Hutchison and Mikulski, would enact such policy.

RESTORING RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE: Protecting the rights of states that do not fund abortion, protecting innocent human life by placing real limits on late-term abortions, and ending funds to organizations that promote and perform abortions.

1. Legal protection to children in the latter months of pregnancy and an end to "partial-birth" abortions. Real restrictions on late-term abortions and an end the practice of D&X abortion.

2. Reverse Clinton administration policy requiring states to use Medicaid dollars for abortions. We urge passage of the Istook/Exxon Amendment.

3. Title X and international family planning assistance funding subsidizes organizations that promote and perform abortions. We urge Congress to end such funding.

RESTRICTING PORNOGRAPHY: Protecting children from exposure to pornography on the Internet and cable television, and from the sexual exploitation of child pornographers.

1. Enact legislation to protect children from pornography on the Internet.

2. Enact legislation requiring cable television companies to completely block video and audio on pornography channels to non-subscribers.

3. Amend federal child porn laws to make *any* possession of child pornography illegal.

PRIVATIZING FEDERAL FUNDING OF CULTURE: The National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and the Legal Services Corporation should become voluntary organizations funded through private contributions.

SUPPORT FOR PRIVATE CHARITIES: Enact legislation to enhance contributions to private charities as a first step toward transforming the bureaucratic welfare state into a system of private and faith-based compassion.

PROTECTING PARENTAL RIGHTS: Enact a Parental Rights Act and defeat the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Ensure that parents' rights over the care and nurturing of their children are not violated. Reps. Steve Largent (R-OK) and Mike Parker (D-MS), and Sens. Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Howell Heflin (D-AL), are drafting parental rights legislation to address this critical problem.

The Coalition urges Congress to reject the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child because it interferes with the parent-child relationship, threatens the sovereignty of U.S. law, and elevates as "rights" such dubious provisions as access to television and mass media.

PUNISH CRIMINALS, NOT VICTIMS: Funds given to states to build prisons should encourage work, study and drug testing requirements for prisoners in state correctional facilities, and should require restitution to victims subsequent to release.

Guidance on the Christian Coalition's Contract with the American Family
May 17, 1995

Background: The Christian Coalition today released its "Contract with the American Family"-- a 10-point agenda, which includes new restrictions on abortion, measures on religious expression (i.e. school prayer, the use of religious symbols in public places and religious invocations at public ceremonies), turning the Department of Education budget over to local schools, making Federal criminals pay restitution to their victims, etc. A copy of the contract is attached.

Talking Points: The contract was only unveiled today, so we have not had a chance to look at it thoroughly, however, the following points can be made:

- Ralph Reed said today that America faces problems because of "the fraying of the social fabric, the coarsening of the culture, the breakdown of the family, and a decline in civility." We agree. The President has been focused on these problems for a long time. He talked about them in the State of the Union, and he will continue to address them in the weeks and months to come.
- I.E. -- This weekend's Character Education Conference at the White House and the national meeting on Healing Civility and Community, scheduled for June 21.
- Mr. Reed says that the purpose of his contract "is not to legislate family values, it is to ensure that Washington values families." That too is a positive statement, in line with what President Clinton has been saying for years. (e.g. his Cleveland speech during the campaign in 1992)
- This issue is not whether we have profound social problems -- we do. The issue is not whether these problems have a moral and spiritual dimension -- they clearly do. The issue is not whether we should address them, as a society as well as a government, with a new spirit of seriousness -- we should. The issue is not whether, but how. Here, there are points of agreement, but also some deep differences. For example:
- We agree that families, especially with children, need sensible tax relief. The President has made just such a proposal, and we will carefully examine others to see whether they are practical.

But:

- We don't think it is right to tamper with the Bill of Rights.
- We don't think it is right to place new restrictions on a women's right to choose.
- We don't think it is right to abandon all federal efforts to help states and localities reach for educational excellence.

Those may be irreconcilable differences

On Religious Freedom:

This is an administration that has taken religious free exercise with full seriousness. The President was an early supporter of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the President has met with religious leaders numerous times to discuss these issues. The President believes that in America freedom of religion need not mean freedom from religion. Those of us who are faithful can reasonably be moved by our faith, not just in private, but also in public.

On a constitutional amendment for prayer in schools:

The President has never seen an amendment in this area that doesn't threaten coercion of individuals against their conscience. Tampering with the First Amendment is not what our country needs and it's not what the American people want.

On a Moment of Silence:

It has been the President's long held view that appropriately-crafted moment of silence laws should be able to pass constitutional muster. While he was Governor, Arkansas had its moment of silence law struck down following a 1985 Supreme Court decision in another state. The President, then Governor, personally took charge of rewriting Arkansas' moment of silence law so that it could pass constitutional muster.

Drafted: KMcKiernan
Cleared: BGalston, 6-2999

From:

Press Briefing

By Michael McCurry

May 18, 1995

Q What, if any, kind of response do you all plan to the Christian Coalition contract?

MR. MCCURRY: Some of you asked me about it earlier and I didn't -- I don't know that there was a lot to respond to. I mean, there are some areas within their proposed contract where I think we have some clear differences. But in general, the tone that Mr. Reed had yesterday as he discussed the impetus for the contract that he proposed was things that I think the President would agree with -- much of what he said the President would agree with. The quality of --

Q Like what?

MR. MCCURRY: Where are my notes from that yesterday? I had some specific quotes in here that -- come on. He said, to quote Ralph Reed, that the fraying of the social fabric, the coarsening of the culture, the breakdown of the family, and a decline in civility are problems that America faces today. I believe everyone here has heard Bill Clinton say much the same. Mr. Reed said that the purpose of his contract is not to legislate family values, it is to ensure that Washington values families. Good quote. I think the President agrees with that 100 percent.

Q How about his prescriptions? Do you agree with his --

MR. MCCURRY: In general -- look, his point in the presentation we saw yesterday is that they don't intend -- they don't make a litmus test, they're not talking about making this a presidential issue. They do want to make them legislative issues. So if you look at them, point by point, as legislative issues, there are some points where there are some disagreements. And chief among them are the issue of choice. The President I don't think would agree with the contract presented by Mr. Reed yesterday when it comes to denying women the freedom of choice that they currently enjoy. And I don't think that we would agree with some of the proposed measures that would, in effect, tamper with the Bill of Rights. But beyond that, I think the language and tone of his presentation were pretty good.

Remarks by Ralph Reed

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The Federal News Reuter Transcript Service

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I want to make it clear that these are the ten suggestions, they're not the ten commandments. This is a public policy document, it is not a theological statement. We make no threats, today we issue no ultimatums, and we make no demands of either party. The contract is designed, rather, to help Congress as it charts a cultural agenda after the first hundred days.

* Our purpose is to present a blueprint on how to address what we believe is the most pressing issue in American politics today, and that is the fraying of the social fabric, the coarsening of the culture, the breakdown of the family and a decline in civility. We have no intention of doing to this Congress what the unions, the feminists, and the gay lobby did to Bill Clinton when he took office two and a half years ago. They made unreasonable demands, presented an extremist agenda, and they forced this administration way out of the mainstream on issues like Lani Guinier, Zoe Baird, and gays in the military. The Clinton administration stumbled out of the starting gate, and it never fully recovered.

Our approach has been very different. We have been patient, willing to listen, engaging in a mutual constructive dialogue, resisting the temptation to rush our own agenda so that we might realize our broader agenda together. And today as we unveil a cultural agenda for this Congress, we present a mainstream and a reasonable approach, one that is stated with respect for our foes as well as our friends and which enjoys the support of the American people.

Why do we do this? We do this for one very simple reason: because even if we balance the budget and we lower taxes and we liquidate the national debt, if we live in a nation in which our inner cities resemble Beirut, in which our children pass through metal detectors into schools that are war zones, and in which one out of every three children is born out of wedlock, we will have failed as a society. Our purpose is not to legislate family values, it is to ensure that Washington values families. And we've distributed -- (applause)

We've distributed copies of the Contract with America to all of you. I'm not going to go into the details of the contract right now other than to say that it includes a religious equality amendment which will guarantee the right of religious faith and its expression to every American, it calls for promoting school choice, it provides for returning control of education to the local level, calls for the passage of a mothers and homemakers rights act which gives tax equity to women who work in the home who want to save for their retirement by investing in a retirement fund, it calls for the privatization of the arts and for the protection of innocent human life. I want to acknowledge that this is the first word and not the last word on such an agenda. There are many other fine and outstanding pro-family organizations like Traditional Values Coalition, Family Research Council, Home-School Legal Defense Fund, and so many others who are going to be making their own contributions, and we look forward to working with them.

In closing, let me just say that today we are launching not only the contract but a nationwide campaign for its enactment. We will spend an estimated \$2 million during this session of Congress on newspaper ads, grassroots mailings, phone banks, fax alerts, and radio and television

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HEADLINE: HYPOCRITICAL ABOUT DIVORCE: MANY, MANY POLITICIANS

BYLINE: By Lars-Erik Nelson, Tribune Media Services

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

The bubbly, ever-engaging House budget chairman, Rep. John Kasich of Ohio, exploded to the front of the Christian Coalition news conference on Wednesday to endorse its 10-point Contract with the American Family.

Kasich bemoaned the collapse of traditional values:

"The American people in their guts, mothers and fathers across this country, know that over the last couple of decades we have removed the speed limits from the highways, the lines on the highways, the yes and the no, the black and the white, and the rights and the wrongs," Kasich said. "And Americans are beginning to say that . . . culture has slipped and it's time once more to assert that Judeo-Christian tradition of rights and wrongs and values that guides our nation in the 21st century."

Good words, indeed - but there is a curious omission in the Christian Coalition's 10-point Contract with the American Family. It calls for tax breaks for kids, school prayer, tougher pornography laws, home schooling, stricter abortion laws, tougher prisons, parental rights (to spank your kid without running afoul of child-abuse laws) and an end to federal financing of the arts.

But the contract has no mention of the biggest single threat to American families - divorce - except for a brief passage that calls for defunding the Legal Services Corp. so that poor women can't get divorced with the help of government-paid lawyers.

This is a strange oversight. More children live in single-parent families - which are now blamed for all our social ills, from crime to unemployment - because of divorce than because of unwed mothers.

Former Education Secretary Bill Bennett has been arguing to his fellow conservatives that divorce is a far bigger danger to American families than, say, gay rights. His "Index of Leading Cultural Indicators" points out that approximately half of all marriages end in divorce and that more than half of divorces involve children.

"Divorce is what's really kicking the hell out of America," Bennett told *Modern Maturity* magazine in March. In a speech to conservatives last year, he called for an end to no-fault divorce laws.

Last fall, Bennett told the Christian Coalition, "If you look in terms of damage to the children of America, you cannot compare the homosexual movement, the gay-rights movement - what that has done in damage compared to what divorce has done to this society."

Bennett is not alone.

Conservative scholar James Q. Wilson writes, "It is now easier to renounce a marriage than a mortgage. . . . Half of all divorced fathers rarely see their children, and most pay no child support."

White House adviser William Galston calls for "braking mechanisms" that would slow down impulsive divorce.

The Southern Baptist Convention and the Roman Catholic church have started marriage-saving programs.

The Communitarian Network is striving to preserve the two-parent family as the basic building block of society.

So discouraging divorce would seem to be a curious thing to leave out of a political "contract" on preserving and strengthening the American family. On the other hand, in today's Republican Party, harping on divorce would be politically incorrect.

There, at the news conference, endorsing old-fashioned family virtues, was Texas Sen. Phil Gramm, divorced from his first wife, Sharon Kinney, after six years of marriage. Gramm had a 1-A-M marriage deferment through the early years of the Vietnam War. He was divorced around the time he turned 27, too old for the draft.

There, too, saluting family values, was House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia, who notoriously informed his first wife of his desire for divorce while she was in a hospital bed (and after he complained that she was too old and homely to be the wife of a president).

There, demanding old-fashioned values, was Kasich, who is divorced and commutes weekends to visit a longtime female friend in Columbus, Ohio. Once, not

so long ago, that would have been called living in sin, fornication, immorality, a bad example to the nation's youth. Today, in these enlightened times, it is barely worth mentioning.

And after the news conference, Christian Coalition delegates went to call on Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole of Kansas, who is divorced from his first wife, a nurse who helped him recover from his war wounds.

Well, it's their lives. Who are we to judge? But listening to a politician's lectures on family values is an excellent argument for another of the Christian Coalition's goals: school prayer.

Absolutely. Let the little children stand up and mouth words they may not believe; let them proclaim virtues they do not practice. It will be excellent training for a career in politics.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 24, 1995

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THE WHITE HOUSE
JUNE 13, 1995

TALKING POINTS

I am delighted to have all of you here and to have the chance to learn more about the work you do. When I first became involved in children's issues more than 20 years ago, I don't think any reporters were assigned exclusively to a beat on children or families.

So I view it as a sign of progress that so many newspapers and television stations now devote resources and space to covering these issues. Still, I'm sure it is often a struggle to convince your editors that the consequences of poverty and teen pregnancy are as important to write about as the O.J. Simpson trial.

As I said when I returned from South Asia, too often issues involving women, or children, or families are dismissed as "soft" or marginal to economic and social progress. In fact, they are directly linked to our future as a country and as a world, and your stories can help people understand that connection.

Journalists in your position play a critical role in educating Americans about the public policy debates in Washington and in your state capitals, as well as about the burdens and uncertainties that so many families shoulder as they try to raise their children.

When I first began working on children's issues as a law student in the early 1970s, we never heard terms like "child abuse" or "child neglect." Now these terms are part of our daily lexicon, in large part because journalists have helped expose the crisis our children find themselves in today.

I suspect that the main difficulty you encounter in your jobs is that so many stories about children exacerbate negative stereotypes. Your greatest challenge is to use the journalistic spotlight responsibly, intelligently, and in ways that help children rather than further harm them.

That means getting beyond simplistic assumptions, presumptions and solutions and exploring the underlying economic and social roots of violence, teen pregnancy, welfare dependency. I hope that you and other journalists covering these issues will remind your audiences that your job is not to satisfy prurient interests but to raise awareness about deep and difficult problems in our society.