

learn this as well from your shining example. We are all part of the American family joined by a common purpose, bound by a common sense of responsibility, challenged by common possibilities that know no limits.

The only limit to the future of this country and to the future that all of you hope to have is what we are willing to demand of ourselves today and in the future. Generations before us have done the groundwork, and now we must build on those foundations.

In just a moment, I will lead the 20,000 volunteers who are here, and some who have already done this a couple of hours ago across America, in a pledge. But I want to ask you and all Americans who will learn of this event to reflect on the words of that pledge, words like "action" and "commitment," "community" and "common ground." It's more than a pledge of personal service; it's a creed for America, a creed we desperately need as we move forward to renew our great country in the 21st century.

To all of you who have taken the pledge to join, who have entered this season of service,

who have redeemed the most important commitment your President ever tried to make to the American people, to give us a chance to come together, to move forward together, I say thank you, and God bless you.

Now let me ask all the AmeriCorps volunteers here to raise your hand and repeat after me:

I will get things done for America to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier. I will bring America together to strengthen our communities. Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground. Faced with adversity, I will persevere. I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond. I am an AmeriCorps member, and I am going to get things done.

[*The AmeriCorps volunteers repeated the pledge line by line after the President.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4 p.m. on the North Grounds at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Eli Segal, Assistant to the President for National Service, and Nancy Gore, late sister of the Vice President.

Statement on the Nomination for Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic *September 12, 1994*

I will look to General Sheehan to continue the innovative efforts of Admiral Miller in defining the role of allied military power in forging a safe and secure world.

NOTE: This statement was included in a statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President nominated Gen. John J. Sheehan, USMC, to succeed Adm. Paul D. Miller as Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic, and to serve as commander in chief, U.S. Atlantic Command.

Statement on Implementation of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 *September 12, 1994*

This law creates the opportunity to include millions of Americans in the political process who have previously been excluded because of difficult and confusing voting rules. I urge all Americans of all political parties to register to vote, and I urge the voter registration groups to continue and expand their efforts to ensure

as many of our citizens as possible are registered.

NOTE: This statement was included in a White House statement announcing the Executive order

of September 12 on implementation of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on Signing the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994

September 13, 1994

I think we ought to give the Vice President a hand for all the work that he has done. [*Applause*] Thank you, Mr. Vice President, for your introduction and for your labors on this bill.

Most of the introductions have been made, but I want to join what has been said. I want to thank the members of my Cabinet, General Reno and Secretary Bentsen and all the others who worked so hard on this. I want to thank all these mayors here, Mayor Giuliani, Mayor Webb, Mayor Rice, Mayor Daley, Mayor James, Mayor Rendell, all the other mayors. I'd like to ask—and there are some county officials here—I'd like to ask all the local leaders who are here to please stand up; they didn't all stand—I'd like to ask them all to stand and be recognized. Mayor Golding, Susan, good to see you. Mayor Schmoke, Mayor Helmke, Mayor Abramson who got cauliflower ear from making his phone calls. [*Laughter*] I'd also like to ask, even though many of them have been introduced, I would like to ask the people without whom we would not be here today, all the Members of the Congress who are here, Republicans and Democrats, to please stand and be acknowledged; every one of them, I'd like for them to stand up. Thank you.

And let me say to all the representatives of the victims groups and the citizens groups how grateful we are to you; to all the leaders of the law enforcement groups; to all the rank-and-file folks who worked so hard; to all the leaders of the community groups of people who wanted to give our kids something to say yes to and to prevent crime before it occurs; to all the ministers—to all of you, I thank you for being here and for making this day possible.

The American people have been waiting a long time for this day. In the last 25 years, half a million Americans have been killed by other Americans. For 25 years, crime has been a hot political issue, used too often to divide us while the system makes excuses for not pun-

ishing criminals and doing the job, instead of being used to unite us to prevent crime, punish criminals, and restore a sense of safety and security to the American people.

For the last 6 years, children have become the most likely victims of violent crime and its most likely perpetrators. And for 6 years, Washington debated a crime bill without action while more and more children died and more and more children became criminals and foreclosed a productive life for themselves.

In the last 2 years, Meghan Sposato lost a mother she had only begun to know; Polly Klaas lost her life to a felon who should never have been back on the streets; and James Darby wrote his President a letter because he was so afraid, only to lose his life walking home before anybody could erase his fears. And still, some people in this town tried to keep this day from happening. But today, at last, the waiting ends.

Today the bickering stops, the era of excuses is over, the law-abiding citizens of our country have made their voices heard. Never again should Washington put politics and party above law and order.

From this day forward, let us put partisanship behind us, and let us go forward—Democrats, Republicans and independents, law enforcement, community leaders, ordinary citizens—let us roll up our sleeves to roll back this awful tide of violence and reduce crime in our country. We have the tools now. Let us get about the business of using them.

One of the reasons that I sought this office is to get this bill, because if the American people do not feel safe on their streets, in their schools, in their homes, in their places of work and worship, then it is difficult to say that the American people are free.

Not so long ago, kids grew up knowing they'd have to pay if they broke a neighbor's window playing ball. I know; I did it once. [*Laughter*] They knew they'd be in trouble if they lied