

Remarks on the Appointment of Bonnie Campbell as Director of the
Office of Violence Against Women
March 21, 1995

Thank you, Sarah, for your wonderful remarks and for the powerful example of your life. I was watching you speak today, thinking of your story, wondering how many other stories like yours there might have been if our society had responded more properly and how many more there will be now because we are going to do the right things.

I thank Attorney General Reno and Secretary Shalala, and of course, Senator Biden and Senator Hatch and Senator Boxer, Senator Harkin, Senator Kerry, Senator Moseley-Braun, Senator Wellstone—we've nearly got a quorum—[*laughter*]—Congresswoman DeLauro, Congresswoman Mink, Congresswoman Morella, Congresswoman Blanche Lambert Lincoln. I thank you all for being here.

This is an important day for me. This is an issue with which I have dealt as President, as a Governor, as an attorney general, as a citizen, going for years with my wife to the shelters in our State for battered women and their children, and as a human being. And I have looked forward to this day for a very long time.

We spend a lot of time in Washington, and we are now having a great and fascinating debate about what the role of this Government ought to be and how we're going to get into the next century and how we're going to create opportunity for all the American people. This is a good thing that we're doing. It's exciting, and I'm having a good time. But you know, let's be honest with each other. If children aren't safe in their homes, if college women aren't safe in their dorms, if mothers can't raise their children in safety, then the American dream will never be real for them, no matter what we do in economic policy, no matter how strong we are in standing against the forces that would seek to undermine our values beyond our borders. This is key to everything else we want to do.

So I applaud the Members of the Congress, and especially those who have been recognized already, especially Senator Biden and Senator Hatch, for recognizing that we had to take responsibility for trying to come to grips with issues that we ordinarily would think of as issues

that belong to local law enforcement or local social agencies or even to the privacy of the home.

When we were fighting so hard last year to pass the crime bill, with the emphasis on more police and more punishment and more prisons and more prevention, one of the things that almost got lost was the Violence Against Women Act. I think it almost got lost for a very regrettable reason in this day and time: The Republicans and the Democrats weren't fighting about it. We really had a national consensus that we had to do something. And because we knew we had to do something and it passed, it was almost unnoticed.

But you know, domestic violence is now the number one health risk for women between the ages of 15 and 44 in our country. If you think about it, it's a bigger threat than cancer or car accidents. The incidence of rape is rising at 3 times the rate of the crime rate. The FBI estimates that a woman is beaten in this country once every 12 seconds. And we know, too, that often when a spouse is beaten, the children are beaten as well.

For too long, domestic violence has been considered purely a private matter. From now on, it is a problem we all share. What are we going to do about it? The first thing we have to do is do what we can to prevent violence. One part of the crime bill I am proudest of will help in our efforts to stop repeat offenses against women. It will prohibit individuals with a restraining order against them from purchasing or possessing a gun, no ifs, ands, or buts.

When crimes do occur, we must restore the rights of victims to their proper place. That means giving them the right to speak at sentencing hearings. And above all, it means helping victims rebuild their lives. We'll require sexual offenders to pay restitution to their victims. We must help people who suffer violence put their lives back on track and put the burdens on the criminals where they belong.

To help in prevention and in assisting victims, the crime bill establishes a Violence Against Women Office at the Department of Justice. Today I am pleased to announce that Bonnie

Campbell of Iowa will be the first Director of that office. As Iowa's first female attorney general, Bonnie Campbell helped to enact strong domestic violence and anti-stalking laws in that State. She worked with counties and college campuses to raise awareness about domestic violence. And she endorsed a victims' rights amendment to the State constitution. A big part of her new job will be helping States and communities to deal with domestic violence.

Today we are making available \$26 million to help the States open rape crisis centers, to staff domestic violence hotlines, to provide victims advocates, to pay for more officers and more training. This is the first downpayment on a 6-year commitment of \$800 million for this purpose.

This is part of a report I should make at least to these Members of Congress who are here about the crime bill. The work has already begun. In just 4 months we have awarded more than 16,000 police officers to half the police departments in America. We're taking guns and criminals off the streets. The "three strikes and you're out" law is being enforced in Iowa and in many other States throughout the country. In short, we are under budget and ahead of schedule. And I want more of that from our Government.

We passed this crime bill with bipartisan support. And I'd be the last person to say that it's the end-all and be-all, the ultimate answer to all the problems of crime in America. But I will not permit the crime bill to be undercut. It is just starting to make a difference in the lives of Americans. We have to keep going. We have to make a difference in the lives of everyone, but especially the women and the children we are called here today to pledge our allegiance to protect.

Let me begin this introduction of Bonnie Campbell and end it with a simple thank you. It's hard to get anybody with good sense to leave Iowa to come to Washington. [Laughter] And I thank her for doing it and for the shining example she has set in public service and for the excellent work I am confident she will do in this important position.

Bonnie.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:11 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sarah M. Buel, Evelyn Green Davis fellow in law at Radcliffe College and 17-year activist on family violence issues. Following the President's remarks, Ms. Campbell made remarks.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the National Science Foundation

March 21, 1995

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 3(f) of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1862(f)), I am pleased to transmit to you the Annual Report of the National Science Foundation for Fiscal Year 1993.

The Foundation supports research and education in every State of the Union. Its programs provide an international science and technology

link to sustain cooperation and advance this Nation's leadership role.

This report shows how the Foundation puts science and technology to work for a sustainable future—for our economic, environmental, and national security.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 21, 1995.