

June 29 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1995

Daley; Rev. Jack Wall, pastor, Old St. Patrick's Church; Debra DeLee, chair, Democratic National Convention; and David Wilhelm, former chairman, Democratic National Committee.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on Emergency Salvage Timber Sale Legislation

June 29, 1995

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am pleased to be able to address myself to the question of the Emergency Salvage Timber Sale Program in H.R. 1944. I want to make it clear that my Administration will carry out this program with its full resources and a strong commitment to achieving the goals of the program.

I do appreciate the changes that the Congress has made to provide the Administration with the flexibility and authority to carry this program out in a manner that conforms to our existing environmental laws and standards. These changes are also important to preserve our ability to implement the current forest plans and their standards and to protect other natural resources.

The agencies responsible for this program will, under my direction, carry the program out to achieve the timber sales volume goals in the legislation to the fullest possible extent. The financial resources to do that are already available through the timber salvage sale fund.

I would hope that by working together we could achieve a full array of forest health, timber salvage and environmental objectives appropriate for such a program.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: This letter was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 30, but was not issued as a White House press release.

Remarks on Receiving the Abraham Lincoln Courage Award in Chicago

June 30, 1995

Thank you so much, Mike Robbins. Thank you for your presentation. Thank you much more for your courage and for your willingness to come back to work after being wounded 11 times. A lot of Americans wouldn't do that, and we appreciate you for doing it.

We thank you, Officer Jackson, Officer Bubalo. We thank the representatives of the Fraternal Order of Police who are here from Chicago and the State of Illinois, Bill Nolan and Sgt. Keith Turney. Thank you, Commander O'Shield. I hope you don't decide to run for President anytime soon after that reception you got when you were introduced—[laughter]—or mayor or anything else. [Laughter]

I want to thank Mark Karlin for what he said and for his long and often lonely battle against handgun violence.

The First Lady and I are delighted to be here with you today. I do want to introduce just one person of the many who came with me today because he carries on our part of the bargain fighting for law enforcement and against violence in Washington, Under Secretary of the Treasury Ron Noble, who is back here with me. Ron, stand up. Thank you very much.

I thank Superintendent Rodriguez for his outstanding leadership. Senator, thank you for what you said and for what you have done. To all the other distinguished officials who are here, I thank you. I want to say a special word of thanks to the mayor for his leadership and for his willingness to roll up his sleeves and actually solve problems.

You know, I like listening to the mayor talk because he never tries to be flowery, he just says what he has to say. [Laughter] But when

he gets finished talking, you don't have any doubt about what he just said. [Laughter] And I like it because he's interested in doing things and giving other people the power to do things and bringing people together. That means a lot to me. We need more in Washington of what you have here in Chicago and in this Austin neighborhood.

I thank the other dignitaries who are here. Congressman, Bishop, thank you for coming. And ladies and gentlemen, I want to say a special word of thanks to some young people who are here from the "I Have A Dream" Program and the AmeriCorps volunteers who are working with them. Where are they? They're over there.

The "I Have A Dream" Program was founded in New York by a friend of Hillary's and mine named Eugene Lange, who believed that if you would reach young people in grade school and tell them that if they'd stay in school and stay off drugs and make their grades, you'd guarantee them that they could go all the way through college. That's what the "I Have A Dream" Program is about. And those kids in this neighborhood are part of that, and our national service program is helping. And I'm proud of them.

Ladies and gentlemen, it's already been said by Officer Robbins and others, but really this award ought to be given today to the officer who was killed here just a few months ago, Daniel Doffyn, and to his partner, and to Mike Robbins and his partner, and to all those who are willing to put their lives upon the line.

You heard the superintendent say it a moment ago, but Officer Doffyn and his partner, Officer Bubalo, were standing just where we stand today, getting ready to go to work, when they heard a call on the radio that said men were breaking into an apartment building just across the street. They were rookie officers who answered the call. They found gang members from another neighborhood who had come to disrupt this neighborhood. They were stopping one of the suspects when another came upon them. He murdered Officer Doffyn. He critically wounded his partner. He did it with a TEK-9 semiautomatic, one of the weapons banned in the 1994 crime bill.

Officer Doffyn was like me in one important respect, the most important of all: He had a daughter, an 8-year-old daughter who now will have to live with the memory of her father and his sacrifice.

When we talk about these issues and the decisions we ought to make on them, we're a long way, in Washington, DC, from the streets of Austin neighborhood. We'd be a lot better off if we had to vote on issues in front of the place where the police officer was killed.

I know that even from the worst tragedies, some good can spring. After the awful, awful bombing in Oklahoma City a lot of the meanness went out of America, and we all began to ask ourselves again, what can we do to do a better job for our country? What can we do to reach across the lines that are dividing us? What can we do to minimize the hatred and extremism in our own country?

I'm told that after Officer Doffyn was killed, children from Howe Elementary School across the street came to the police station to make sure their favorite police officers were safe, and that some of the officers took the children home in squad cars to reassure them and make sure they were okay. Now, outside this neighborhood that might surprise some people, but I've learned enough from the mayor and others about what you're doing here to know that you've been working for a long time to build that kind of community. Your mission statement—I wish every neighborhood in America had a mission statement—your mission statement says you want to make your neighborhood safe, prosperous, secure, productive, and proud. That's what I want for America.

In this neighborhood the words "community" and "policing" mean the same thing because the men and women of the 15th are the community and they understand that the best way to lower the crime rate is to prevent crime, to stop it from happening in the first place. They are working with you to set up a drug court to help people who get in trouble find a way to get out of trouble and go on to productive lives, not just go to prison. They are working with you to reach out to your children, to help them stay off drugs and stay out of gangs. They are watching out for you as you watch out for one another.

So many of you have taken responsibility for this neighborhood and your lives, and you are getting results. Crime is down across the board. I drove through these streets today and I saw homes, schools, businesses, churches, police stations, all doing their part to keep you safe and pull you together.

Despite the sadness that we all feel today, you should all be very proud. And you should be committed to keeping this community strong and to saving the lives and futures of these children.

When I ran for President, I promised that I would do everything I could to help you in this effort. Part of it was trying to restore the economy and bring opportunities to places that had been too long denied them, which is why I worked with the mayor and others to put an empowerment zone in Chicago, to try to prove that we could bring jobs and incomes and a future to people. But a big part of it was just trying to restore a simple sense of security to people who work hard and obey the law and are doing the best with their own lives.

The mayor referred to this, and Senator Simon knows it well because he was there for the whole time, but the Congress actually debated a crime bill for 6 years without doing anything about it, because there was always some political objection on the right or the left for getting together and doing something that would make a lot of sense at the grassroots level a long way from Washington. Well, we passed the crime bill, and it was largely written by the police officers of America. And it had a requirement that we put 100,000 more police on the street, a 20 percent increase of people walking the beat, working in the neighborhoods, helping to prevent crime in the first place.

I can tell you, that bill just passed late last year, but we are already—we already have given law enforcement agencies in this country enough grants to hire more than 20,000 new police. We're moving ahead of schedule to do that.

The second thing we did was to try and give law enforcement and community officials the tools they need to help save kids, to give children something to say yes to as well as something to say no to. The law enforcement people in this country knew that we needed tougher punishment, we needed greater protection. We passed the "three strikes and you're out" law. We passed the law strengthening the death penalty provisions, especially for people who kill law enforcement officers in the line of duty. But we also did what the law enforcement officers told us to do, which is to give them and community activists the tools to reach children early, to get them on the right path in life, to give them schools and jobs and opportunities and a future.

And yes, we took on the gun issue. And I want to say a little more about that in a minute, but it's been mentioned already. We passed the Brady law, which requires people to wait 5 days while we check the criminal and mental health histories of people who want to buy handguns, unless there is a computerized instant record check in place in a State. And we did ban 19 kinds of assault weapons and any identical copycats that might be made of them, for the obvious reasons you know.

I'll never forget—Mayor, you probably remember this—but we came here in 1994, and we sat at a panel in which people from your health care institutions told us that the mortality rate from gunshot wounds was dramatically increasing because the average victim had more bullets in his body when they showed up at the hospital. Why? Because of these assault weapons. I learned that in a hearing in Chicago from people who make a living working in emergency rooms, seeing people like Officers Robbins and Jackson every day. So yes, we did that.

And as we remember Officer Doffyn, I say there is at least one more thing we must do. Today I am announcing support for legislation that will ban armor-piercing bullets of all kinds.

Senator Simon referred to what we are trying to keep—and he's right, we do ban some kinds of armor-piercing bullets, thanks to him and others. But you need to know the law is written, in my opinion, in the wrong way. Today the law is written to ban ammunition based on what it's made of. If it contains certain materials, then it's off the street. Now, that's a good thing, but it's not good enough because clever people have figured out how to design ammunition made from common materials that do just as much damage. This legislation will change that. It will see to it that we judge ammunition not based on what it's made of but based on how much harm it can do. That should be the test. And the test should be simple and straightforward. If a bullet can rip through a bulletproof vest like a knife through hot butter, then it ought to be history. We should ban it.

Many Members of the United States Congress, Senator Moynihan, Senator Biden, Bradley, Kohl, Congressman Schumer from New York, have joined Senator Simon and others for a long time in trying to deal with these issues. Now, I know this will be controversial among some, just like the Brady bill was, just like the assault weapons ban was. But I want to tell

you something, folks. There's a reason that I decided that I should be the first President ever to take on these issues while in office rather than later. [Laughter] And I say that—I'm grateful for the support we've received from former Presidents. I'm grateful that Ronald Reagan stood up for the Brady bill and Jim Brady. I am grateful that President Bush resigned from the NRA when they called Federal officials "jackbooted thugs." We should applaud them. [Applause] We should applaud them.

But I want you to know the reason I decided to do it, apart from just—first of all, I was sick and tired of reading stories about young children in tough neighborhoods who were straight-A students, being gunned down standing by a bus stop. I got tired of reading that. You know, I got tired of reading all these high school kids and junior high school kids thinking about what kind of funerals they were going to have because they knew so many kids that had been shot. I got tired of reading about it.

But there's another reason. I come from a place where more than half the people live in towns of 10,000 or less, where more than half the people have never been to a city as big as Chicago, and more than half the people have a hunting or a fishing license or both. When I was—long before I was a teenager, I had fired a .22 at cans and birds in bird season. I grew up thinking of guns as a part of my culture and not something evil or bad that would ever be used to kill people.

I understand the kind of folks who have formed the basis of a lot of the opposition to this gun legislation because they never see what you live with every day. They literally don't experience it. So I understood that. But you know, what my position is, is very different. I don't think this is—I don't think the Brady bill or the assault weapons ban or the cop-killer bullet legislation is about the right to keep and bear arms. I think it's about whether we as Americans are willing, those of us who are law-abiding, to undergo some minor inconveniences so we can solve our problems together and keep our kids alive and have a safer future and be fair to our police officers. That's what this is about.

And it's interesting, you know, most of the people who oppose the Brady bill and oppose the assault weapons ban, they don't mind walking through an airport metal detector. But I'm old enough to remember when those metal detectors were first put in when you walk through

an airport. Now, we don't think about it today, do we? Even though most of us would never consider carrying a gun on an airplane, much less a bomb, we go through the metal detectors, and we don't think anything about it. Why? Because it is a minor sacrifice to get on a safe airplane.

There was a decision made by the Supreme Court the other day that's somewhat controversial, but I support it. I want to tell you about it because it's the same point. The Supreme Court said it was all right for a school district to require young people who wanted to be on the football team to undergo drug testing, not because we think most kids are bad—they're not—not because most of them are using drugs—they're not—but because drugs are tearing the heart out of the children of America. It is a privilege to play on a sports team or be in the school band or do anything else like that, and it is a minor inconvenience for young people to take a stand to help to get drugs out of our schools.

Now, that's what I think about this. So I say to all the people who own guns and don't feel like they're ever going to do anything wrong and just want us to punish criminals, it is no big deal if you have to wait a few days to get the next handgun. You will survive. And it's a good thing.

And I say to all the people who love to hunt and shoot in shooting contests, you will be able to do it, and you will find a way to do it even without the TEK-9's. It's worth it to get the Uzis out of the high schools and off the streets, and the bullets out of the bodies of these police officers we celebrate today. It is worth it. It is worth it.

Nobody is interfering with your right to hunt or to enter into any kind of sporting contest or to do whatever else you want to do. But this is a minor, minor change that's good for all of us. And sooner or later, those of us who live in disparate areas of the country with different experiences have got to realize we have common obligations to the common good. And everybody in the smallest rural hamlet in my State is going to be better off if kids don't get killed on the streets of Chicago and police officers don't get gunned down because we got rid of assault weapons and we got rid of cop-killer bullets. We're going to be better off if that happens.

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And you know, let me just say one other thing to everybody who objects to this today. I'm almost 50 years old. I have never seen a deer, a duck, or a wild turkey wearing a Kevlar vest in my life. You do not need—[laughter]—you do not need these bullets.

So I ask you all to support this. I ask you to oppose the efforts of the lobbies in Washington to lift the ban on assault weapons. I ask you to oppose their efforts to roll back the crime bill; oppose their efforts to keep us from getting all these horrible police-killing bullets out of our lives; and, as Senator Simon said, oppose their efforts to indiscriminately say all felons can have their guns back.

We live in the freest nation the world has ever known, because over 219 years we have found ways to agree on discipline, restraint, and order, to preserve our liberty. And all, all systems of discipline, restraint, and order affect the law-abiding and the lawless equally. That is the point.

So I ask you all today to remember that. I accept this award today, even though I don't feel like I deserve it, because I just did my duty. And I knew because of my childhood and the life I live and the State I governed what the issues were, what the stakes were, and what the forces in play were in this battle over the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, and the cop-killer bullet issue.

Most of the people on the other side of this issue are good people. But they don't have your experience. And it is time for them to think about you. It is time for them to make minor concessions so that you can have major advances in safety, in security, in the future of your chil-

dren, in the security of your police officers, in the Austin neighborhood, in Chicago, Illinois, and throughout the United States of America. It is time for us to pull together on this issue and do the right thing.

Abraham Lincoln, who saved our Republic, said something very important in his first inaugural. When the country was coming apart at the seams over the issue of slavery and we were headed smack-dab into a Civil War, and when half the people in the country hated him and he'd been elected President with only 39 percent of the vote, he had the understanding to say, "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies."

So I say to you today, my friends: Let us stand up for the future of our children. Let us stand up for the security of our police forces and their ability to work with us. And let us say to those who disagree, we ask you for a minor contribution to a major public good. Let us not be enemies but friends.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. at the 15th District Police Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Mike Robbins, Talmadge Jackson, and Milan Bubalo, Chicago police officers wounded in the line of duty; Bill Nolan, president, Chicago Fraternal Order of Police; Sgt. Keith Turney, chairman of the trustees, Illinois State Fraternal Order of Police; Leroy O'Shield, commander, 15th District, Chicago Police Department; Mark Karlin, president, Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence, which sponsored the award; Matt Rodriguez, Chicago Superintendent of Police; and Bishop Shepard Little, Church of God in Christ.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Legislation To Limit the Availability of Certain Handgun Ammunition

June 30, 1995

To the Congress of the United States:

Today I am transmitting for your immediate consideration and passage the "Saving Law Enforcement Officers' Lives Act of 1995." This Act would limit the manufacture, importation, and distribution of handgun ammunition that serves little sporting purpose, but which kills law enforcement officers. The details of this proposal

are described in the enclosed section-by-section analysis.

Existing law already provides for limits on ammunition based on the specific materials from which it is made. It does not, however, address the problem of excessively powerful ammunition based on its performance.