

Statement on the Third Anniversary of the Brady Act February 28, 1997

Today marks the third anniversary of the implementation of the Brady act—one of the most effective public safety measures ever.

The facts speak for themselves. Earlier this week, I announced that during its first 28 months, the Brady act prevented more than 186,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers from buying a handgun. Every month the Brady act blocks an average of 6,600 illegal over-the-counter gun sales, with indicted or convicted felons constituting more than 70 percent of the rejections.

These statistics should end any remaining doubt that might exist. The Brady act is working.

This important public safety measure is the result of the tireless efforts of two courageous Americans, Jim and Sarah Brady. The Bradys have waged a moral and political battle to save lives and to keep handguns out of the hands

of criminals. Their dedication to ending gun violence and making our streets safer is an inspiration to law enforcement and all Americans. Last year, I was deeply honored to bestow upon Jim the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor our Nation can bestow on a citizen.

I look forward to working with the Bradys to pass my anti-gang and youth violence legislation, which will require child safety locks for all handguns and apply the Brady act to anyone who has committed a violent juvenile offense.

NOTE: Public Law 103-159, "To provide for a waiting period before the purchase of a handgun, and for the establishment of a national instant criminal background check system to be contacted by firearms dealers before the transfer of any firearm," approved November 30, 1993, took effect on February 28, 1994.

Statement on Signing International Population Assistance Program Legislation February 28, 1997

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.J. Res. 36, which approves a Presidential finding related to international population programs. Approval of this joint resolution permits the release on March 1 of funds previously appropriated for international population assistance programs administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In making these funds available without further delay we are assuring that these programs will continue to serve the many millions of women and men whose health and well-being—and ability to plan their own futures—depend on family planning services supported by USAID. Moreover, we are underscoring the indisputable fact that family planning reduces abortion—as best evidenced by significant declines in abortion rates as family planning services are becoming available in Russia and Central and Eastern Europe.

The passage of this joint resolution at the opening of the 105th Congress is particularly

gratifying as it signifies what we can accomplish by working together—Democrats and Republicans. By agreeing to secure the timely release of these funds, we are assuring that the United States will continue to lead the world in providing voluntary family planning assistance. More importantly, we are helping the women of the world to prevent millions of unintended pregnancies, permit the healthy spacing of births, prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, reduce recourse to abortion, and avert deaths from childbirth that often leave infants and their siblings motherless.

It is clear to me—and I am delighted that a strong bipartisan group of legislators in the House and Senate has joined in affirming the view—that family planning is a key element of our comprehensive strategy to improve women's