

May 23 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

quarrels into our schools or inexplicable eruptions of violence in otherwise peaceful communities, when our children's safety is at stake we must take action, and each of us must do our part.

For more than 5 years, we have worked hard here in our administration to give parents and communities the tools they need to protect our children and to make our schools safe, from tighter security to more police to better prevention. To promote discipline and maintain order, we are encouraging and have worked hard to spread curfews, school uniforms, tough truancy policies. We instituted a zero tolerance for guns in schools policy. It is now the law in all our 50 States. And we'll work hard to make it a reality in all our communities to keep deadly weapons out of the hands of our children and out of our schools. And we will continue to demand responsibility from our young people with strong punishments when they break the law.

This year Congress has an opportunity to protect children in our schools and on our streets by passing my juvenile crime bill, which will ban violent juveniles from buying guns for life and take other important steps. We shouldn't let this chance pass us by.

But protecting our children and preventing youth violence is not a job that Government can or should do alone. We must all do more, as parents, as teachers, as community leaders,

to teach our children the unblinking distinction between right and wrong, to teach them to turn away from violence, to shield them from violent images that warp their perceptions of the consequences of violence.

We must all do more to show our children, by the power of our own example, how to resolve conflicts peacefully. And we must all do more to recognize and look for the early warning signals that deeply troubled young people send before they explode into violence. Surely, more of them can be saved and more tragedies avoided if we work at it in an organized way with sensitivity and firm discipline.

This weekend we grieve with the families of Springfield, Oregon. We may never understand the dark forces that drive young people to commit such terrible crimes, but we must honor the memories of the victims by doing everything we possibly can to prevent such tragedies from occurring in the future and to build a stronger, safer future for all of our children.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:30 p.m. on May 22 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 23. In his remarks, the President referred to Kipland P. Kinkel, who was charged with the May 21 shooting at Thurston High School in Springfield, OR, in which 2 students were killed and 22 wounded.

Radio Remarks on the Passage of the Northern Ireland Peace Accord Referendum

May 23, 1998

Today we are rejoicing at the news from across the Atlantic. The people of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have decisively approved the April 10th peace accord. It is the culmination of a springtime of peace, and it must be the beginning of a long season of happiness and prosperity.

I salute the leaders who stood for hope against fear, the future against the past, unity against division. Most of all, I congratulate the Irish people for having the courage and wisdom to vote for a brighter future for their children.

As of today, peace is no longer a dream, it is a reality. You have indeed joined hope to history. All over America, the eyes of Irish-Americans, and indeed all our peace-loving citizens, are smiling. We are very proud of you.

We pledge that we will work with you to build a better future for all of your people and ours.

NOTE: The President's remarks were prerecorded for later broadcast in Ireland. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.