

will stand for, overall, above all, beyond everything else.

And that is what all these incidents have in common. We must not let the great promise of the modern world be undermined by the most ancient of hatreds. We cannot fundamentally alter human nature, but we can alter the rules by which all of us let our nature play out. And we can call forth our better selves. That is what we have worked for 6½ years to do. And you know as well as I do, if the economy works better it's easier to do.

But when you go home tonight and you get up tomorrow and somebody says, "Why in the world did you write a check and go to that thing?" Tell them, "Because I believe in the vision and the ideas that the country has followed in the last 6 years. We have a lot more to do, and most important of all, I really want America to be a community and a model to the world, because I want my children to have a future more like my dreams than the worst nightmares we see in the paper."

The President's Radio Address *May 15, 1999*

Good morning. In the past few weeks, ever since that terrible day in Littleton, people all across America have searched their souls and searched for solutions to prevent this kind of tragedy from happening again and to reduce the level of violence to which our children are exposed.

Last Monday at our White House strategy session on children and violence, representatives of every sector of society agreed on one fundamental fact: Making progress requires taking responsibility by all of us. That begins at home. Parents have a duty to guide children as they grow and to stay involved in their lives as they grow older and more independent.

Educators have a responsibility to provide safe learning environments, to teach children how to handle conflicts without violence, and how to treat all young people, no matter how different, with respect. They also need to teach them how to get counseling or mental health services if they're needed.

We can do it, but not unless we work at it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner host Walter Shorenstein; Bill Lockyer, State attorney general; Gov. Gray Davis of California and his wife, Sharon; Mayor Willie Brown of San Francisco; dinner cochairs Martin Maddaloni and Tom and Victoria O'Gara; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Andy Tobias, treasurer, and Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; baseball legends Willie Mays and Hank Aaron and their wives, Mae and Billee, respectively; Tom Mauser, whose son, Daniel, was killed in the Columbine High School shooting by gunmen Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold; gun control activist Steven Sposato and his daughter, Meghan; and Timothy McVeigh, who was convicted of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building bombing in Oklahoma City, OK.

Communities have a responsibility to make sure that there is a village, as the First Lady said, that supports all its children, especially those who don't get their needs met at home. And the community needs to do more to get our kids involved in working with each other and serving the community, not being isolated from it.

And here in Washington, we have a responsibility. We've got a responsibility to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. There's a broad national consensus on that point. At the White House conference, the gun manufacturers agreed that we need common-sense approaches. Everybody agrees except the U.S. Senate. For example, everyone knows we need a real law to close the deadly gun show loophole, through which thousands, indeed, tens of thousands of guns are sold each year without background checks—even though they'd have to have a background check to be sold in a gun store.

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Now, the Senate declined to pass that bill. Even worse, the Senate's substitute bill is riddled with new loopholes permitting convicted felons to get guns at pawn shops, no questions asked, and making it harder, not easier, for law enforcement to trace guns used in crimes. If the Senate wants to fix the problem, it should fix the problem, not make it worse. The American people deserve better. They know law-abiding citizens don't need loopholes in our gun laws, only criminals do. I sure hope that in the coming weeks the Senate will step up to its responsibility and do the right thing by our children.

I've always said the entertainment industry must do its part, too. In 1993, shortly after I became President, I traveled to Hollywood and spoke there to members of the community about their responsibility. I said then, "You have the capacity to do good, to help change the way we behave, the way we think of ourselves. Examine what together you might do to help us rebuild the frayed bonds of community, to give children nonviolent ways to resolve their frustrations."

After 6 years of work, the entertainment industry is helping parents to limit children's exposure to violence, working with the administration on a voluntary rating system for television and the V-chip to enforce it, and on parental screening for the Internet and ratings for all Internet games sales. But there is still too much violence on our Nation's screens, large and small. Too many creators and purveyors of violence say there is nothing they can do about it. And there are still too many vulnerable children who are steeped in this culture of violence, becoming increasingly desensitized to it and to its consequences and, therefore, as studies show, hundreds of them more liable to commit violence themselves.

By the age of 18, the typical American will see 40,000 dramatized murders. There are those

who say they can or should do nothing about this. But I believe they're wrong. Every one of us has a role to play in giving our kids a safe future. And those with greater influence have greater responsibility. We should see movies and music, TV programs, video games, and advertising for them made by people who made them as if their own children were watching. Members of the entertainment community can make a big difference.

Today I want to issue three specific challenges to them. First, the whole industry should stop showing guns in any ads or previews children might see. Second, I challenge theater and video store owners all across our country to enforce more strictly the rating systems on the movies they show, rent, and sell. You should check ID's, not turn the other way as a child walks unchaperoned into an R-rated movie. Third, I challenge the movie industry to reevaluate its entire ratings systems, especially the PG rating, to determine whether it is allowing too much gratuitous violence in movies approved for viewing by children.

Our administration is fighting to do all we can to protect children. The entertainment industry should do everything it can, too. Across America people are coming together, saying, "Yes, together we can change this culture of violence; together we can give our children a safer future and a culture of values we'll be proud to pass on to future generations." We can do it together.

Thank you.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:26 p.m. on May 14 in the library at the Rainier Club in Seattle, WA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 15. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 14 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Radio Remarks on the Observance of Armed Forces Day

May 15, 1999

Armed Forces Day was created in 1950 as a way for Americans to thank our men and women in uniform for their service and sacrifice.

Our Nation has changed a good deal since then. But our debt to the Armed Forces is as great as ever.