

Statement on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Report June 21, 2000

Today's report by the Treasury Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) demonstrates that our administration is tough on gun traffickers who peddle guns to criminals and young people. Between July 1996 and December 1998, ATF initiated more than 1,500 firearms trafficking investigations, resulting in Federal convictions of 812 criminals to a total of 7,420 years in prison—with an average sentence of 9 years.

Gun trafficking puts thousands of guns onto our Nation's streets and contributes significantly to our Nation's gun violence problem. The investigations documented in today's report involved the diversion of more than 84,000 firearms from the legal to illegal market. The report shows that loopholes in our laws help make gun shows and corrupt gun dealers major channels for gun trafficking. Many of the diverted weapons supplied by traffickers were later used to commit serious crimes, including homicides,

robberies, and assaults. Each gun put into the hand of a criminal represents the possibility of one more life lost, one more family destroyed.

Through tough enforcement and smart prevention, we have reduced gun crime by 35 percent and increased Federal gun prosecutions 16 percent since 1992. There is more we can do to keep guns out of the wrong hands. I will continue to press the Congress to fully fund my \$280 million gun enforcement initiative, to add more ATF agents and inspectors to crack down on gun traffickers, corrupt gun dealers, and armed gun criminals, as well as hire more Federal, State, and local gun prosecutors to put more gun criminals behind bars. But Congress must also close the deadly loopholes in our laws that make guns accessible to criminals and children in the first place. Congress should move forward to close the deadly gun show loophole once and for all and pass other stalled common-sense gun measures without further delay.

Remarks at an Irish-American Democrats Dinner for Terence McAuliffe June 21, 2000

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, let me say, I had to rush over here from another event, and I didn't have time to go change my tie. *[Laughter]* I thank you for letting me come anyway.

Thank you, Stella, for everything you said and for everything you've done these last 4 years. Thank you, Chris Dodd, for being willing to take the chairmanship of the Democratic Party when they said our party and its President were dead as a doornail, and we proved that we had a little Irish left. *[Laughter]* And you've been great, and I'll never be able to thank you enough.

We have some other people here I want to acknowledge: the best Secretary of Education in the history of this country, Dick Riley, is here; Congressman Joe Crowley from Queens; Congressman Jim Maloney from Connecticut is here, I think. Where are you, Jim? *[Applause]* Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy

Townsend from Maryland. Let me say—I'm going to do a little pander here—I'll be bad fooled if someday we're not out here campaigning for her on the national ticket.

And now we come to the would-be, want-to-be Irish—*[laughter]*—and some very good friends of Ireland. Senator Chuck Robb of Virginia—I've said this every place I could, but one of the things the Irish admire are people of conscience who do what they think is right against all the odds. I could make you a very compelling case that based on his constituency and the people arrayed against him, that Chuck Robb is the bravest person in the United States Senate. He needs your help to be reelected, and I want you to help him.

Congressman Donald Payne from New Jersey, a true friend of ours, thank you. And Representative Sheila Jackson Lee from Houston is here. Our present Democratic chair and the former mayor of Philadelphia, Ed Rendell—the first