

**Letter to Members of the Senate on
Crime Legislation**

August 22, 1994

Dear _____:

This week, the Senate has an historic chance to move us beyond old labels and partisan divisions by passing the toughest, smartest Crime Bill in our nation's history.

I want to congratulate members of Congress in both houses and both parties who have reached across party lines and worked in good faith to produce this Crime Bill. This isn't a Democratic Crime Bill or a Republican Crime Bill—it's an American Crime Bill, and it will make a difference in every town, every city, and every state in our country.

The Crime Bill produced by House and Senate conferees and passed yesterday by Democrats and Republicans in the House achieves all the same objectives as the bipartisan Crime Bill which the Senate passed last November by a vote of 95 to 4.

Many of the central provisions of this Crime Bill were included in the Senate bill:

- * Nearly \$9 billion to put 100,000 new police officers on our streets in community policing;

- * An additional \$4.6 billion for federal, state and local law enforcement (a 25% increase above the Senate bill);

- * \$9.9 billion for prisons (a 30% increase above the Senate bill), coupled with tough truth-in-sentencing requirements that will shut the revolving door on violent criminals;

- * Life imprisonment for repeat violent offenders by making three-strikes-and-you're-out the law of the land;

- * Federal death penalties for the most heinous of crimes, such as killing a law enforcement officer;

- * A ban on handgun ownership for juveniles;

- * Registration and community notification to warn unsuspecting families of sexual predators in their midst;

- * A ban on 19 semiautomatic assault weapons, with specific protection for more than 650 other weapons; and

- * Innovative crime prevention programs, such as the Community Schools program sponsored by Senators Danforth, Bradley,

and Dodd, and the Violence Against Women Act sponsored by Senators Biden, Hatch, and Dole.

One of the most important elements of this Crime Bill is the creation of a Violent Crime Reduction Trust Fund, which ensures that every crime-fighting program in the bill will be paid for by reducing the federal bureaucracy by more than 270,000 positions over the next six years. The idea for the Trust Fund came from Senators Byrd, Mitchell, Biden, Gramm, Hatch, and Dole, and the Senate approved it by a vote of 94 to 4. The Trust Fund will ensure that the entire Crime Bill will be fully paid for, not with new taxes, but by reducing the federal bureaucracy to its lowest level in over 30 years.

The Senate led the way in passing these important anti-crime proposals last November, and I urge you to take up this Crime Bill in the same bipartisan spirit that marked that debate. The American people have waited six years for a comprehensive Crime Bill. It's time to put politics aside and finish the job. After all the hard work that has gone into this effort by members of both parties acting in good faith, we owe it to the law-abiding citizens of this country to pass this Crime Bill without delay.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Senators of the 103d Congress. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 23.

**Remarks on Signing the King
Holiday and Service Act of 1994**

August 23, 1994

Good morning. Thank you. Please be seated. It was such a beautiful and, for August, a cool summer day, we thought we ought to move to the Rose Garden today and give us all a chance to enjoy this wonderful beauty.

Senator Wofford, Congressman Lewis, Martin Luther King III, Mr. Segal, ladies and gentlemen, we're here for the signing of the King Holiday and Service Act of 1994. And I have some words I want to say about that, but if I might, I'd like to mention a few things about the service that the Congress is en-