

We sure don't want to give criminals like gang members, who may be victims of their associates, any way to take advantage of these rights just to slow the criminal justice process down.

We want to protect victims, not accidentally help criminals. But we can solve these problems. The problems are not an excuse for inaction. We still have to go forward.

Of course, amending the Constitution can take a long time. It may take years. And while we work to amend it, we must do everything in our power to enhance the protection of victims' rights now. Today I'm directing the Attorney General to hold the Federal system to a higher standard than ever before, to guarantee maximum participation by victims under existing law and to review existing legislation to see what further changes we ought to make.

I'll give you an example. There ought to be, I believe, in every law, Federal and State, a protection for victims who participate in the criminal justice process not to be discriminated against on the job because they have to take time off. That protection today is accorded to jury members; it certainly ought to extend to people who are victims who need to be in the criminal justice process. And we shouldn't wait for that kind of thing to be done.

I want investigators and prosecutors to take the strongest steps to include victims. I want work to begin immediately to launch a computerized system so victims get information about new developments in a case, in changes in the status or the location of a defendant or a convict.

I do not support amending the Constitution lightly. It is sacred. It should be changed only with great caution and after much consideration. But I reject the idea that it should never be changed. Change it lightly, and you risk its distinction. But never change it, and you risk its vitality.

I have supported the goals of many constitutional amendments since I took office, but in each amendment that has been proposed during my tenure as President, I have opposed the amendment either because it was not appropriate or not necessary. But this is different. I want to balance the budget, for example, but the Constitution already

gives us the power to do that. What we need is the will and to work together to do that. I want young people to be able to express their religious convictions in an appropriate manner wherever they are, even in a school, but the Constitution protects people's rights to express their faith.

But this is different. This is not an attempt to put legislative responsibilities in the Constitution or to guarantee a right that is already guaranteed. Amending the Constitution here is simply the only way to guarantee that victims' rights are weighted equally with defendants' rights in every courtroom in America.

Two hundred twenty years ago, our Founding Fathers were concerned, justifiably, that Government never, never trample on the rights of people just because they are accused of a crime. Today, it's time for us to make sure that while we continue to protect the rights of the accused, Government does not trample on the rights of the victims.

Until these rights are also enshrined in our Constitution, the people who have been hurt most by crime will continue to be denied equal justice under law. That's what this country is really all about, equal justice under law. And crime victims deserve that as much as any group of citizens in the United States ever will.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:11 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the following parents who lost children in violent attacks: Roberta and Vincent Roper; John and Pat Byron; Mark Klaas; Pam McClain; and John Walsh.

Remarks on the Terrorist Attack in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

June 25, 1996

An explosion occurred this afternoon at the United States military housing complex near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

Our best information at this time is that there are many injured. There have been fatalities. We do not yet know how many. The explosion appears to be the work of terrorists,

and if that is the case, like all Americans, I am outraged by it.

The cowards who committed this murderous act must not go unpunished. Within a few hours, an FBI team will be on its way to Saudi Arabia to assist in the investigation. Our condolences and our prayers go out to the victims' families and their friends. We're grateful for the professionalism shown by the Saudi authorities in their reaction to this emergency. We are ready to work with them to make sure those responsible are brought to justice.

Let me say again, we will pursue this. America takes care of our own. Those who did it must not go unpunished.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:22 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House.

Memorandum on the Development of a National Sexual Offender Registration System

June 25, 1996

Memorandum for the Attorney General

Subject: Development of a National Sexual Offender Registration System

One of the most important duties of government is to provide safety and protection for our children from sexual offenders. Sex crimes and sex offender recidivism present very real and substantial challenges to law enforcement in protecting vulnerable populations and preventing crime. Law enforcement data show that, as a group, sex offenders are significantly more likely than other repeat offenders to commit additional sex crimes or other violent crimes, and that tendency persists over time.

One of the most significant provisions in the "Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994" (Crime Bill) was the Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act (Wetterling Act). It promotes the establishment by States of effective registration systems for child molesters and other sexually violent offenders.

In addition, I recently signed "Megan's Law," which builds upon the Crime Bill by

making community notification concerning registered sex offenders mandatory. Megan's Law will require States to make public relevant information about child molesters and sexually violent offenders who are released from prison or placed on parole.

Sex offender registration systems can greatly assist the investigation of sex crimes. In addition, creation of State-based registration systems is crucial for enabling State law enforcement agencies to communicate with each other regarding sex offenders who cross State lines. When sex offenders move, the law should move with them.

It is time to take the next step. That is why I am directing the Department of Justice to develop a plan for the implementation of a national sexual predator and child molester registration system. This system should build upon the Wetterling Act—which is already establishing 50 separate sex offender registration and notification systems—by combining this information into a national system.

I want the Department to work with all 50 States, the Congress, the Judiciary, and all appropriate Federal agencies on a plan for such a system so that law enforcement officers at every level will have access to information on all sexual offenders in the United States and share this information with one another.

Please report to me in writing by August 20, 1996, on the specific steps you will take to develop this policy. Thank you for all the work you and the Department have done to date, and for the work it will take to put this important piece in place.

William J. Clinton

Memorandum on the Combined Federal Campaign

June 25, 1996

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: 1996 Combined Federal Campaign of the National Capital Area

I am delighted that the Secretary of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin has agreed to serve as the chair of the 1996 Combined