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Statement on Signing Legislation Amending the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968

October 27, 1998

Today I am pleased to approve S. 2235. This legislation amends the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, which makes grant funds available under the Justice Department's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, to encourage local school systems to enter into partnerships with local law enforcement agencies by employing "school resource officers" in and around elementary and secondary schools. A school resource officer will now be a sworn law enforcement officer and be deployed to work in collaboration with schools and community-based organizations. By helping to educate students in crime prevention techniques and peaceful conflict resolution and by identifying changes in a school's environment that might discourage crime and violence, the officer will address crime, disorder, gangs, and drug-related activities.

We have achieved almost 90 percent of our pledge to put 100,000 additional cops on the street in community policing activities, and this has helped drive down crime rates across the Nation. This bill will help bring those same successful community policing methods to our schools.

I want to thank the sponsors of this legislation for their leadership in securing enactment of this law: Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell in the Senate, and Representative Jim Maloney of Connecticut who worked tirelessly to secure overwhelming bipartisan passage of this important safe schools measure in the House.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 27, 1998.

NOTE: S. 2235, approved October 27, was assigned Public Law No. 105–302. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Remarks at a Unity '98 Reception

October 27, 1998

Thank you very much. Just while he was speaking, Senator Rockefeller's trust fund earned enough interest to guarantee us five more congressional seats. [*Laughter*]

Let me say first, I want to thank Jay and Sharon for having us all here. I thank Steve Grossman and Bob Torricelli and Nancy Pelosi, all of whom are here, for their leadership in this Unity campaign. Senator Kerrey, thank you for your leadership on the Senate Campaign Committee. And my good friend and neighbor Congressman Bill Jefferson from New Orleans back there, where we hope we will get another Member of Congress from Louisiana in this election. I hope we can do that.

I want to say to Jay Rockefeller, we've been friends a long, long time. I used to say, Bob Kerrey and Jay Rockefeller and I were Governors together back when we had a life, before we all moved to Washington. And Jay Rockefeller could have done a lot of things with his life. His daughter is up there teaching in that school in New York because of the example that her father set and the example her mother set. And this is a better country because of you. And Hillary and I both love and admire you very much, and we thank you.

I want to say to all of you, you cannot imagine how important your contributions are in this, the 11th hour of this campaign. I think there is beginning to be a sense out there that this is not an ordinary election because it's not an ordinary time. What we have going for us are a lot of great candidates and the right message.

The American people want us not to spend this surplus until we save the Social Security system for the 21st century. They want us to put the education of our children first. And they understand that having smaller classes in the early grades, with the biggest group of students in history, is a laudable goal, and it's a great thing. We won the 100,000 teachers fight, but they know the majority in Congress kept us from passing an initiative to build or repair 5,000 schools. So if they have no place to sit, it will be hard for the teachers to teach the children.