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the land. We owe it to the families of the children who died in Littleton to give all Americans the safety they deserve.

Statement on House Action on Gun Control Legislation

June 18, 1999

This week, instead of listening to the American people and strengthening our gun laws, the House of Representatives listened to the gun lobby and did nothing at all. The House leadership gutted this bill in the dark of night to keep commonsense gun legislation from seeing the light of day.

The American people will not stand for this. Our Nation is waiting for Washington to pass a real law that keeps guns away from children and out of the hands of criminals. I call on the Congress to stop playing politics and start living up to its responsibility to help save lives.

Proclamation 7205—Father's Day, 1999

June 18, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year on Father's Day, Americans take special joy in remembering the many cherished moments they have shared with their fathers through the years. Reading stories before bedtime, playing catch after dinner, camping out in the backyard, sharing driving lessons—at these moments and countless others throughout a lifetime, devoted fathers are there to guide their sons and daughters, to instill confidence in them, and to provide for them and protect them in times of need.

The impact of these moments on children's development and future is immeasurable. Although children may not understand it until they become parents themselves, these are the times when fathers impart to their sons and daughters strong values and teach them important lessons about love, responsibility, faith, hard work, and determination. In these moments, fathers imbue in their children the strength and self-esteem they need to achieve their full potential.

As children grow and mature—from toddlers carried on their fathers' shoulders to teenagers who need help navigating the challenges of adolescence to young men and women who need guidance on life, love, family, and career—their relationships with their fathers change as well. Yet, the need for a father's friendship and wisdom continues to grow; and throughout all the seasons of life, fathers remain role models, teachers, heroes, and friends.

Vice President Gore and I have challenged fathers to be actively involved in their children's lives and to provide both emotional and financial support. Last June, the Vice President released a report showing that children who grow up without fathers are more likely to do poorly in school, to get into trouble with the law, and to have difficulty in getting and keeping a job. But our fathers cannot always meet their responsibilities to their children without help. That is why it is crucial that we lift up our fathers through efforts like the reauthorization of the Welfare-to-Work program so that more low income fathers can work, pay child support, and become more involved with their children.

We can never truly repay our fathers—whether biological, adoptive, foster, or stepfather—for their many precious gifts to us, for their steadfast faith in our potential and abilities, for their unwavering devotion and unconditional love. We can, however, express our deep appreciation for all they have done and thank them for the many sacrifices they have made to create a better life for us. There is no more fitting national tribute to fathers than reserving a day in their honor, and there is no more appropriate celebration of their profound impact on the lives of their children and the strength of our Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, in accordance with a joint resolution of the Congress approved April 24, 1972 (36 U.S.C. 142a), do hereby proclaim Sunday, June 20, 1999, as Father's Day. I invite the States, communities across the country, and all the citizens of the United States to observe this