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from Indiana, Mr. Birch Bayh. Thank you, Senator. Thank you. I'm glad to see you. Thank you.

Now, the Huskies. I watched them all year, too. They won 34 games, and they were supposed to be a big underdog in the championship. They had a team that was determined not to be defeated. Richard Hamilton's outside touch and the tough defensive play of Ricky Moore and Khalid El-Amin gave them a 77–74 down-to-the-wire thriller that will never be forgotten by people who love basketball.

I also want to say that I'm glad Richard is coming to Washington to help the Wizards. We need it. [*Laughter*] Jim Calhoun's achievements as the Huskies' coach are tremendous. He's the only coach in NCAA history to win 250 games at two different Division I programs. He's the winningest coach in UConn history, with the third most wins in all of college basketball in the last six seasons.

When I called Jim to congratulate him on the victory, we had a wonderful talk about a lot of things, and I'll always remember our conversation. But I told him, and I thought that the Duke coach, Mike Krzyzewski, gave him and these fine young men, the ultimate compliment; you can only imagine how disappointed he was. He has all those great players; they were supposed to win everything easily. It was a fabulous game.

The truth is, UConn was better than they thought they were. And it was—at a moment of enormous disappointment, he got before the national television cameras and he said, "We did not lose this game. We were defeated by a better team." And that says a lot about this coach and these players.

So, Coach, the microphone is yours.

[*Coach Calhoun made brief remarks, and the team captains presented a jersey and ring to the President.*]

The President. Look at this. I think it's a little big for me, don't you? [*Laughter*] Thank you. I really love this, thank you.

Now, when does practice start? [*Laughter*]

Coach Calhoun. I'll see you Saturday morning at 11.

The President. Thank you very much.

Coach Peck. Can we make a presentation?

The President. Sure. Give them another hand, guys. [*Applause*]

[*Coach Peck and the team's senior captains presented a jersey to the President.*]

The President. I can wear this. It's the right size, right? It's the right size. I love it.

[*A Purdue senior captain thanked the President and congratulated the University of Connecticut Huskies.*]

The President. You know, in a year and a half when I'm not President anymore, people will, all of a sudden, start treating me as an elder statesman or something, and they will all want my advice on various things. One of the things people ask me all the time is, isn't it hard to keep your feet on the ground and the sense of basic humility when, you know, the Secret Service are with you, you fly around on Air Force One, every need is just at your fingertips? And I think I will have two pieces of advice: One is, have regular press conferences; that'll cut you down to size. [*Laughter*] And the other is, always meet with the champions of the men and women's NCAA basketball tournament. They will make you feel very small.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:08 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Tiffany Young's parents, Gloria and Billy Ray Young, and Pat Summitt, coach, University of Tennessee Lady Volunteers.

Remarks on Unveiling Public Service Announcements on Youth Violence

October 15, 1999

The President. Thank you very much, Epatha; welcome back to the White House. She was here back in February, again trying to help children, when we unveiled the PSA to help our children get the health care they need. So she is becoming the Federal Government's number one volunteer for America's children, and we're grateful for her.

I think she knows that if she and the rest of us could do enough for our children in a preventive and preparatory way, we'd put

a lot of police officers and actors playing police officers out of work—[*laughter*]—because we wouldn't have nearly as much trouble. I thank you so much.

Attorney General Reno and Secretary Shalala, thank you both for your commitment to helping our children and to unifying our Government's resources—not having a lot of little, indistinct programs that are separate, one from another.

I want to thank all of those who are here supporting this campaign. Thank you, Dr. Roz Weinman, from NBC. Thank you for everything you've done. I want to thank the ADL national director, Abraham Foxman, the Human Rights Committee's executive director, Elizabeth Birch, the people from La Raza, and all the other groups that have supported this endeavor.

I'd also like to acknowledge the young people behind me. They're from Eastern High School in Washington, DC, and they are actively and personally working to prevent youth violence. They are the symbols of the people we are trying to empower with this public service campaign, and we ought to give them a hand. [*Applause*]

Six months ago next week we will observe the half-year anniversary of the tragedy at Littleton, Colorado. As awful as it was, we all know it was not an isolated event. We have seen since and we saw before—in a string of violent incidents at school and in the fact that 13 young people lose their lives every single day to gunshots, in ones and twos—that our children, notwithstanding the fact that we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years and a dramatic drop in the murder rate, are still subject to a nation that is too dangerous and can be made safer.

That is why we have asked every sector of our society to get involved in the search for solutions to youth violence, to hatred, to the absence of control, to environmental and cultural factors that need to be dealt with. We've asked people to help at home and school, in Hollywood and in the heartland, in our State capitals and in the Nation's Capital.

In August we helped launch the National Campaign Against Youth Violence, to pull together commitments from people and organizations from all different walks of life. Although this new campaign is not even 2 months old, it has already made a remarkable start. Over the coming months, it will roll out a major media campaign, begin supporting anti-violence concerts and townhall meetings, in-school and after-school programs, and sponsor a city-by-city effort to shine a spotlight on the local initiatives that are producing the most promising results.

The executive director of this national campaign, Jeff Bleich, is here with us today. I introduced him when we named him, but I want to thank you again for your great work.

Today we are pleased and grateful that NBC is making its own commitment to protect our children from youth violence. As part of it's "The More You Know" campaign, NBC has created a series of ads that speak to parents and children about how families can help to stop violence and hate before they start. I would like to now stop and show one of these ads, which features Epatha and her "Law & Order" colleague, Angie Harmon. So could we show the ad?

[*At this point, the public service announcement was shown.*]

The President. Thank you, thank you, and thank you. [*Laughter*]

This ad and others like it will be seen by millions of viewers every day. In clear and powerful terms, they will convey the message that stopping violence and intolerance begins at home. They say if you're a parent, you owe it to your children to sit down with them, to draw them out, to give them a comfortable opportunity to express their fears, to give you early warning if there's a problem you need to address.

The thing I like best about it is the message I think every parent ought to try to give every child: If you've done something wrong, tell me. It's okay. It's not the end of the world. Before it gets too bad, tell me.

As you saw, these ads also provide an 800 number and a web address, so viewers can immediately get the best advice from national organizations which deal with these issues every day.

I look forward to continuing to build on the progress that NBC, its national partners, and the fine actors who appear in this campaign have started. It's a wonderful example

of what you can accomplish, with the power of television, to send out positive messages to parents and children alike.

I also want to emphasize that we are going to change the way we in the Federal Government do our part, along the lines that the two Cabinet members here have long advocated. Youth violence has many origins and so many facets. Not just one but many of our Cabinet agencies are working to provide solutions. And they should be. They get contacted by people all over the country. Today I had this year and last year's winner of the Points of Light Award in the White House for pictures. And an enormous percentage of these national winners were people who were involved in trying to keep our kids out of trouble and give them good things to do.

So we see responses ranging from community policing to mental health to after-school programs to job opportunities. To respond to what Donna and Janet have talked to me about for years—Janet sent me another memo just a couple of weeks ago about how we've got to get the Government to work together on this—we are creating a new Youth Violence Council. The job of the Council will be to coordinate, accelerate, and amplify all the anti-violence efforts now coming out of our Cabinet agencies, so that they will work together, not at cross purposes; they will waste less money and make the money they have go further; and they will touch more children's lives.

So I want to thank you, Madame Attorney General, and you, Secretary Shalala, for your suggestion, and we will do this.

I also want to say again that it is my strong conviction that preventing youth violence requires Congress to do more. It has been 6 months since Littleton now. Congress has had more than ample time to analyze and act on the elements of this problem. They have had more than enough time to recognize that one of the biggest problems of intentional and accidental violence against our children is the appalling ease with which young people can gain access to guns.

And yet, after a very encouraging vote in the Senate last May—when the Vice President was able to break a tie and pass legislation that makes a lot of sense, among other things closing the Brady background check loophole that didn't apply to gun shows and flea market gun sales—there has been no action, because the leadership has done nothing but delay.

So again, I say to the Republican leadership, I know this is a tough issue for you; I know that nobody likes to make the NRA mad looking towards the next election. But we—when I went to the American people in 1992 and I said, "Let's adopt the Brady bill, and let's ban assault weapons," and I told all the hunters in my home State—which is about half the people that breathe down there, me among them—[*laughter*]—I said, "Look, I'm telling you this will not affect hunting. This will not affect sporting events. It will make our country a safer place." It was an argument no one knew. It's not an argument anymore. We have the results.

The Brady bill has kept 400,000 people who had criminal records or otherwise should not have had handguns from getting them, and we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years. This is not an argument anymore. There is evidence. And we now know that a lot of people who shouldn't get these guns know they can go get them at a gun show or an urban flea market because there is no background check. There are loopholes in the assault weapons ban in terms of the importation of inappropriately sized magazines, of ammunition clips, and other problems that we ought to address. So I would say again, the time to act is now. The country overwhelmingly supports this.

I want to give the House a pat on the back again for passing a decent Patients' Bill of Rights last week. They had to break the stranglehold of an interest group that had the allegiance of their leadership. They have to do it again. But if they do it, they'll feel real good about it, just like they did last week. [*Laughter*] You know, this is another one of those issues—it's not a particularly partisan issue, except in Washington, DC. And we need to get free of all that and think about these kids.

I feel the same way about the hate crimes legislation. Since I first proposed the hate crimes bill—believe it or not, hundreds of Americans, like young Matthew Shepard in Wyoming or James Byrd in Texas, have been killed or injured simply because of who they

are, because of their race, their faith, because they're gay. And I think this is important for America and important for our leadership at home and around the world.

What do I spend my time on around the world? If I'm trying to deal with peace in Ireland, what am I trying to do? Get people over their religious—if we try to make peace and avoid another Rwanda in Africa, what are we trying to do? Get people of different tribes not to kill each other. If we're trying to make peace in Kosovo and Bosnia, what are we trying to do? Trying to get people over their ethnic and religious hatreds. And on and on and on.

This is a deep thing in the human psyche that has been with us since the dawn of time. And of course the most stunning example of all is the struggle we are still making to harmonize and reconcile the people of the Middle East, in the very heart of the place that gave birth to all three of the world's great religions that hold there is one creator, God.

Now, when America is a force in all these places but at home, you have to read that a guy that hates people that aren't just like him shoots a bunch of kids at a Jewish community center and then drives around and kills a Filipino postman working for the Federal Government—he got a two-for—the guy was an Asian and a Federal Government employee. And you read there is a guy that belongs to something in the Middle West that he called a church—even though they don't believe in God; they believe in the supremacy of white people—and he shoots a fine young man who was a basketball coach at Northwestern and then toodles down the road again and kills a young Korean Christian coming out of his church, and you see all these things happening.

It seems to me very hard to make the case that America, for our own sanity and our own humanity and for what we owe to the rest of the world, should not pass strong hate crimes legislation and do it without delay this year.

So again let me say, to every proposal someone can raise the objection, this will not solve every problem. If we did that, no one would ever do anything constructive. That's like saying if you decided to go on a diet and you stay on it 3 days, you won't lose the 20 pounds you want to lose. That's like saying, don't do this because even though you should do this, even when you do it, there are three other things you should do.

I mean, all these arguments don't make any sense. Look, I'm proud of the fact that I had the chance to be President when Americans believed we could lower crime again and where we have a 26-year low in the crime rate. But we have the highest murder rate of any civilized country in the world, still. The rate of accidental deaths of children by gunshots is 9 times higher than the rate of the next 25 industrial economies combined.

What I'm trying to do with this PSA is to mobilize the American people to save our children, so the next President can say America is the safest big country in the world. Why don't we have a big goal here? It's nice to say that we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years; maybe by the time I leave office, we can say it's the lowest in 30 years. Maybe we'll really be chugging along here.

But don't you want to really be able to say, every time you look at a young person like this fine young boy here in this beautiful red sweater—[*laughter*]—that this child should grow up in the safest big country on the face of the Earth? Let's have a goal worth fighting for, for our children. And let's mobilize people to do what can be done now, in their families, and let's have nobody run and hide from the responsibility we all have to give that gift to our children in the new millennium.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in the Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to S. Epatha Merkeson and Angie Harmon, actors, NBC's "Law & Order"; Rosalyn Weinman, executive vice president, broadcast standards and content policy, NBC; Abraham H. Foxman, national director, Anti-Defamation League; and Jeff Bleich, executive director, National Campaign Against Youth Violence.

Memorandum on the White House Council on Youth Violence

October 15, 1999

Memorandum of the Attorney General, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Education, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

Subject: White House Council on Youth Violence

Violence by youth and against youth is an issue that deeply concerns us all. Youth violence can be thought of as a juvenile crime issue, as a public health issue, and as a school safety issue. It affects every region and demographic group. As many recent incidents have made us aware, it is a problem that can strike with unexpected force—and that now demands uncommonly unified responses. That is why I announced, on August 17, 1999, that a nonprofit, nonpartisan "National Campaign Against Youth Violence" had been established to bring together all segments of society to help prevent youth violence.

The Federal Government already addresses many aspects of youth violence through its programs. I am particularly proud of the joint efforts of the Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of Education in developing the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative. These agencies also worked well together to help us respond quickly to the Columbine High School incident. I have read with interest the report of the Attorney General's Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. I look forward to the report that the Surgeon General in response to my May request is preparing on the causes of youth violence. The Secretary of Labor's efforts to address the needs of youth are also about to bear fruit, as high-poverty communities implement our new Youth Opportunity Grants, and as the Secretary and the Attorney General finalize their agreement for cooperative work on those grants and on Labor's Youth Offender grant program.

With so many agencies and programs involved, and with the need for my Administration to work closely with different elements of State and local governments, tribes, schools, community groups, and families, it has become increasingly clear to me that the Federal Government needs a more effective policy coordination strategy for youth violence issues. Therefore, today I direct the Assistant for Domestic Policy to form a White House Council on Youth Violence to provide this policy coordination, to provide flexible and timely responses to the challenge of youth violence, and to ensure that our Nation's citizens are able to benefit from the Federal Government's many antiviolence initiatives.

Structure of the Council

The Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy will chair the Council. The Office of the Vice President and the Office of Management and Budget will be regular participants. Four agency heads will be the regular program members of the Council:

- The Attorney General, responding to the juvenile crime aspects;
- The Secretary of Health and Human Services, responding to the public health aspects, including mental health aspects, and to family issues;
- The Secretary of Education, responding to the school safety issues; and
- The Secretary of Labor, responding to youth employment and out-of-school youth issues.

The Chair of the Council may add such other officials as he deems appropriate to further the purposes of this overall effort or to participate in specific aspects of it. For example, matters relating to public health aspects would involve the Surgeon General. Matters relating to firearms control or drug abuse would involve the Secretary of the Treasury and the Director of National Drug Control Policy, respectively. Implications for economic development policies would call for involvement of the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of Commerce. Comparable policies for Indian country would engage the Secretary of the Interior. Issues relating to community service opportunities for youth would involve the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service.