

Statement on the 1998 Uniform Crime Report

October 17, 1999

The 1998 Uniform Crime Report released by the FBI today shows that serious crime has continued to fall in every region of our Nation for the seventh straight year. The murder rate is at its lowest since 1967. The overall violent crime rate is down, and gun crimes, rapes, robberies, assaults, and juvenile crime have all dropped to their lowest levels in over a decade. This is good news for America's families, and it shows we can indeed turn the tide on crime.

My administration's strategy of 100,000 more police, fewer guns in the hands of criminals, thanks to the Brady law, and more tools for communities to combat crime is working to make our streets safer and our communities stronger. But tragedies from Littleton to Los Angeles show that we must do more to protect our communities from gun violence. Even as crime falls, we must not let down our guard. That is why we must redouble our efforts to build on what works—by fully funding our COPS program to put more police on the street and by passing commonsense gun legislation to keep guns out of the wrong hands. Together we can make America the safest big nation in the world.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 15 but was embargoed for release until 6 p.m., October 17.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Economic Team and an Exchange With Reporters

October 18, 1999

Federal Budget

The President. Good morning. I have just completed a meeting with my economic team to see what we can do to reach overall budget agreement with the congressional leadership. In just 4 days, the resolution that temporarily funds the Government will expire. And yet, Congress still has not sent me a budget that maintains our fiscal discipline, pays down Social Security, reforms Medicare, and honors

the priorities of the American people, especially including education, and including 50,000 more community police for our children, for our streets, and a steadfast commitment to preserve and protect our environment.

Now, there is an overwhelming consensus across our country, and even here in Washington, that we face no challenge more critical than the education of our children. When our children graduate, they will be the largest and most diverse group of graduates in our history. They will be in a vastly more global and complex and information-dominated economy than ever before. For their sake, and the sake of our continued prosperity, we have wisely made—as a people—education our number one priority.

That means shrinking class size while increasing quality by fulfilling our commitment to put 100,000 teachers in the classroom—something the Republicans in Congress supported last year. It means making sure our children are ready for the year 2000 by ensuring that every one of them has access to computers in their classrooms. It means keeping schools open after school and during the summer. It means expanding mentoring and Head Start. It means having strategies that impose high standards and accountability, give schools funds to turn around themselves if they're failing, but shuts them down if they can't turn around. It means more funds for charter schools.

Now, if we're going to make these critical investments and maintain our fiscal discipline to keep our economy strong, we're going to have to make tough choices, and we're going to have to make them together. There are 4 days until the continuing resolution expires. Inaction is not an option. I will do everything I can to meet our priorities in a responsible way.

As I have said repeatedly in recent weeks, indeed, for years, my door is open to Members of both parties who are willing to work with us. If we're going to finish the job the American people sent us here to do—reach real results in educating our children, fighting crime, protecting our environment—then we have to put politics aside and seek common ground.