

But I would argue to all of you that because of the good times, we have a peculiar responsibility to think about the big long-term issues that will frame the lives that we dream for our children. And we have an opportunity to shape the future in a way that perhaps no generation before us has ever had. One of the things that we ought to do first is to make sure as many children as possible have a full future.

You know, any of us who have ever been in a hospital delivery room know that when a baby comes into the world, the first thing that's done is to make sure the infant can draw its first breath. As we embark on a new millennium, among all of our other responsibilities, surely it is our sacred obligation to ensure that each and every child, from the first breath on, will be drawing the cleanest, purest, healthiest air we can provide. Today's a big step in the right direction, and I thank all of you who have been involved in it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the multipurpose room. In his remarks, he referred to Gloria Hackman, nurse, Maury Elementary School.

Videotape Remarks on the "America's Millennium" Celebration

December 21, 1999

I want to invite all Americans to join Hillary and me for "America's Millennium," a spectacular 3-day celebration in our Nation's Capital to ring in a new year, new century, new millennium. Join us in honoring our past and imagining the future, by kicking off the celebration at 11:00 a.m. on December 31st with an opening ceremony at the Main Street Millennium stage at 12th and Constitution. Enjoy free performances and programs at many of the Smithsonian museums, and food and fun at the city's block party.

Usher in the year 2000 at America's Millennium Gala at the Lincoln Memorial, beginning at 9:00 p.m. It will include a stirring concert, a premiere of a film on the 20th century by Steven Spielberg, and a spectacular finale of lights and fireworks. All events are free and open to the public. For more

information, call 1-888-294-2100, or log onto Americasmillennium.gov.

From my family to yours, Happy New Year—and a happy new millennium.

NOTE: The address was videotaped at approximately 10 a.m. on December 16 in the Roosevelt Room for later broadcast, and the transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 21. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.

Statement on Gun Control Legislation

December 21, 1999

Today Senator Schumer released an important new report that shows us how vital it is for us to change the way the gun industry does business. The report contains more evidence that a very small proportion of gun dealers is linked to a very high proportion of crime guns traced by police. It also shows that most of the guns that end up in the hands of criminals first pass through a middleman—for instance, a straw purchaser or an illegal gun trafficker. That is why I have pushed Congress to pass commonsense gun measures to crack down on traffickers who supply guns to criminals. And that is why my administration has begun to engage the gun industry on a range of steps the industry itself can take.

Thanks to the Brady law, our increased support for State and local law enforcement, and other steps we've taken, gun violence in America is down. But no one believes it is down far enough. The message of today's report is simple: It's time for Congress and the gun industry to help clamp down on bad dealers and stem the flow of guns to criminals. It's time for Congress and the gun industry to help us make our country safer. I hope this report will help push that cause forward.

Executive Order 13144— Adjustments of Certain Rates of Pay

December 21, 1999

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the