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FACT SHEET

COMBATTING VIOLENT CRIME

The President has articulated the four fundamental principles which guide all of our efforts to combat violent crime.

- ° A primary purpose of government is to protect citizens and their property. Americans deserve to live in a society in which they are safe and feel secure.
- ° Those who commit criminal offenses should, and must, be held accountable for their actions.
- ° Our criminal justice system must have as its objective the swift and certain apprehension, prosecution, and incarceration of those who break the law.
- ° Success in accomplishing our criminal justice system goals requires a sustained, cooperative effort by federal, state and local law enforcement authorities.

The President's program includes legislative proposals and other initiatives to strengthen federal, state, and local laws; enhance cooperative law enforcement efforts; increase prison capacity; and reform the nation's criminal justice system to ensure both the certainty and severity of punishment for violent criminals.

Violent Crime in America

The chance of being a violent crime victim in the United States continues to be greater than that of being injured in a traffic accident. Approximately 6 million Americans were victims of violent crime in 1989.

The violent crime situation in general has improved significantly since its peak in 1981, and remained relatively stable since 1988. Although, the number of murders rose from 1988 to 1989, it remains well below the 1980 figure. In short, we are keeping the lid on violent crime, but the situation is a highly volatile one, and the nation's criminal justice system is being stressed to its limits and in need of fundamental reforms.

Administration Action

The Attorney General, Treasury Secretary Brady, and other Administration officials have taken action to implement each step of the President's plan which was not dependent upon legislative action.

The President's Proposals Passed by Congress

The Administration convinced Congress to fund:

Significant Increases for Enforcement

- ° 300 **FBI** positions to implement their violent crime and repeat offender program;
- ° 150 positions to enhance the **U.S. Marshals Service's** fugitive apprehension efforts;
- ° 109 positions to **INS** and 38 new Immigration Judges to expedite deportation of criminal aliens.

Significant Increases for Prosecution

- ° 1,375 new positions for **U.S. Attorneys Offices**;
- ° \$45.9 million for the **Judiciary** for pre-trial services, probation, juror fees, court security and court administration.

Significant Increases for Federal Prisons

- ° \$1.4 billion for 24,500 new bed spaces -- a 77% increase. Federal prison capacity is being more than doubled at President Bush's initiative.

Footdragging by Congress

The Congress has failed to adopt other parts of the President's Comprehensive Violent Crime Control bill including key provisions to:

- o **restore an enforceable death penalty** for the most aggravated Federal crimes and extend capital punishment to a number of new offenses, such as murder for hire;
- o **reform Habeas Corpus** to curb abuse and eliminate the seemingly endless process of repetitive appeals and reviews which serve no purpose but to delay justice;
- o **reform the Exclusionary Rule** to assure that legal technicalities do not prevent the truth from being heard in court or to allow the guilty to go unpunished;
- o **make drug testing a mandatory condition** of Federal probation, parole or supervised release;

- o **enhance Federal penalties for firearms violations** and provide a bonus to states for doing the same; restrict gun magazines of over 15 rounds; and limit access to firearms by criminals by closing loopholes in current laws.

What Needs to be Done

Every effort should be made to push aggressively for the enactment of the fundamental criminal justice reforms embodied in the President's own violent crime and drug control proposals. "Sound-alikes" or quick fixes won't suffice.

Because violent crime is primarily a state and local responsibility, attention must be focused on the need for adopting comparable reforms and making adequate resource commitments at the state and local levels. Federal efforts to combat violent crime should continue to be directed primarily on its interstate and international aspects; improving law enforcement cooperation and coordination, training and technical assistance; data collection and intelligence sharing; and leadership.