

about us, but because they make life more interesting without letting us forget our common humanity.

And that is the only thing that makes democracy the best of all systems of government. If everybody participates, you have a high chance that we come to the right conclusion. And it is profoundly important. I just was thinking, I'm so grateful that we have made these huge steps forward in the Irish peace process. I'm very grateful for the progress we are making in the Middle East.

I was just in Kosovo with all those schoolchildren that got to go home because the United States and our NATO Allies stuck up for them and said they couldn't be wiped out just because of their religion or their ethnic background. But I know that if we want to continue to do good around the world, we have to be good at home. This Irish agreement, it's wonderful. How many people died to get there? And the Middle East, we've got a lot of hard decisions to make, but they're not hard when compared with the alternative.

And so I say to all of you, we have a chance to escape that and to meet these huge challenges when we've got more resources and more confidence and more evidence that we can make progress than any time in my lifetime. But we can only do it if we do it together.

You know, I just came from this gun violence group meeting. And I told them that the big fight we had over the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, all these things, they really were sort of whole different views of the world about what is the nature of freedom, what is the nature of society, what is the nature of our responsibilities to one another. You know, to me, I came from a hunting culture, but it was a no-brainer to me that we ought to be for the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, because I thought that a modest amount of inconvenience on the part of 95 or 99 percent of the people to find the 1 percent of the people who had no business with assault weapons, had no business with handguns, who were criminals, had other problems in their background. To me, that made me more free, not less free, because I think mutuality is important, the media. And you believed that.

And there is no group of Americans that has a bigger stake in our getting this right than Hispanic-Americans, the fastest growing minority, people who have known all the prejudice and all the promise of America, both, people who now are setting all kinds of records in new business growth and achievements in every area of our national life, but because we still have such a large group of first-generation immigrants, also have the highest high school dropout rates, the highest education problems.

Listen, we can get all this right—we can get all this right—if everybody has a voice that is heard. That is why what you are doing is so profoundly important.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 p.m. at the Grand Havana Room. In his remarks, he referred to State Assembly Speaker Antonio R. Villarraigosa; Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina; and Lydia Camarillo, executive director, Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project.

### **Letter to Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen on the Review of Space Launch Failures**

*November 29, 1999*

*Dear Mr. Secretary:*

Thank you for conducting and reporting on your thorough and in-depth review of the U.S. space launch failures that occurred in 1998 and 1999. I am pleased to know that you have identified the root causes behind each of the recent launch failures and that you have worked with NASA, the Intelligence Community, and industry to take corrective actions to prevent recurrences. I also appreciate your efforts, and the efforts of industry, in uncovering and addressing the broader systemic concerns that may have contributed to this series of failures.

I have asked Dr. Neal Lane, my Assistant for Science and Technology, and Mr. Sandy Berger, my Assistant for National Security Affairs, to review your report. Now and in the next century, our national security, civil, and commercial space sectors will continue to depend on reliable access to space to

achieve our broader national goals. Your report correctly points out the importance of successfully flying the remaining current fleet of expendable launch vehicles already on contract, with missions valued at more than \$20 billion, while assuring mission success during the transition from these current systems to the modernized Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicles.

Thank you again for the hard work and dedication of the government-industry team in uncovering the technical and management problems associated with these launch failures. Please implement appropriate actions to correct the causes of the failures and ensure our nation's ability to reliably access space in the future.

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: This item was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 1. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

**Proclamation 7257—National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month, 1999**

*November 30, 1999*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

Drivers who operate motor vehicles while under the influence of alcohol or drugs are one of our Nation's greatest public safety risks; those drivers take advantage of the privilege of driving without assuming the corresponding responsibility of driving safely. In 1996 alone, more than 46 million Americans drove their cars within 2 hours of using drugs, alcohol, or both, causing death or injury to themselves and thousands of others each year.

Thanks to the grassroots activism of organizations such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, greater public awareness of the dangers of impaired driving, and stronger laws and stricter enforcement, we have made progress in our efforts to keep drunk and drugged drivers off the road and reduce alcohol-related fatalities. Last year, the number of people killed in alcohol-related crashes

reached a record low, and the number of young people killed in such accidents fell to the lowest rate ever recorded. But as anyone who has lost a loved one to an alcohol-related crash will attest, one impaired driver on the road is one too many.

That is why safety continues to be my Administration's top transportation priority, and that is why we remain committed to eliminating drunk and drugged driving. Because research shows that the risk of a fatal car crash significantly increases when a driver's blood alcohol content (BAC) exceeds .08, I continue to challenge the Congress to enact a tough national standard of impaired driving at .08 BAC. In support of this goal, last July Vice President Gore announced incentive grants totaling \$57 million to 17 States and the District of Columbia for lowering the legal threshold for drunk driving to .08 BAC. These grants make up part of the more than \$500 million in Federal grants authorized under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, which I signed into law June 9, 1998, to offer States incentives to enact and enforce laws that make driving with .08 BAC or greater a drunk driving offense.

I am pleased that today, thanks to legislation I signed in 1995, every State in our Nation and the District of Columbia has enacted zero tolerance laws for underage drinking and driving. I urge leaders and policymakers at the State and local level to continue to focus resources and public attention on drunk- and drugged-driving prevention and enforcement programs. Using these three powerful tools—increased public awareness, stronger laws, and tougher enforcement—we can make our neighborhoods and highways safer and continue to reduce deaths and injuries.

In memory of the thousands of people who have lost their lives to alcohol- and drug-impaired driving, I ask that all motorists participate once again this year in a "National Lights on for Life Day." By driving with car headlights illuminated on Friday, December 17, 1999, we will underscore the profound responsibility each of us has to drive free from the influence of alcohol or drugs.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by