

To any company that sells violent products, I say, children are more than consumers. I understand nobody made anybody buy any of this stuff. But every day, a responsible society declines to do some things for short-term gain that it can do. And that is what we have to think about. These children are our future, our most precious resource. Raising them is any society's most important job.

Don't make young people want what your own rating systems say they shouldn't have. I might say again, as has already been acknowledged, many, many people in the entertainment industry have worked with us on this, on the ratings system, on the V-chip, on the screening technology for the Internet.

I noticed one network executive, a few days ago, actually canceled a program because its violent content was inappropriate, and I applaud that. But I also read with concern the news that some of the new programming coming up for this fall on some networks will be even more violent than last year's. The time has come to show some restraint, even if it has a short-term impact on the bottom line.

I also want to challenge the owners of movie theaters and video stores, distributors, anyone at any point of sale, enforce the rating systems on the products that you sell. Check the ID's. Draw the line. If underage children are buying violent video games or getting into R-rated movies, the rating system should be enforced to put a stop to it. And if, as many of us suspect, there is still too much gratuitous violence in PG-13-rated movies, the rating systems themselves should be reevaluated.

I want to thank Senators Brownback, Lieberman, Hatch, and Kohl for the bipartisan work they have done on this issue. Again, I want to commend State Representative Mary Lou Dickerson from Washington, who read about young Arthur, helped to create a task force on video game violence; and thanks to her work with Pam and the Mothers Against Violence in America and the Washington Retailers' Association, who are all represented here today, video game retailers in Washington State now voluntarily sign a pledge to parents, committing themselves to check ID's and block sales of violent games to minors. That's something that

ought to happen in every State in the United States of America.

Again I say, we can do something about this. It will take a grassroots campaign. It will take everybody doing his or her part. This is a problem we face together, a problem America can solve together. There is no more urgent task for our future.

You were all looking at this young man speaking today, thinking, what a wonderful thing that a person that young could speak so clearly, so confidently, about things that are so right. You look around at the other young people here today who are involved in this effort in some way or another, and you thank God that we have this legacy of children.

A lot of those kids that haven't made it through all these school violence incidents were just as good, just as fine, had just as much to give the world. We've got to quit fooling around with this. We've got a chance. Our hearts are open. Our ears are open. Our heads are thinking.

I know this stuff sells. But that doesn't make it right.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:46 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Arthur Sawe, who introduced the President, and his mother, Caroline; Mayor DeeDee Corradini of Salt Lake City, UT, president, U.S. Conference of Mayors; Mayor Timothy Kaine of Richmond, VA; and Maryland county executives Wayne Curry, Prince Georges County, and C.A. (Dutch) Ruppertsberger, Baltimore County. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

**Letter to the Attorney General and the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission on a Study on Youth Violence and Media Marketing**

*June 1, 1999*

*Dear Madam Attorney General: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)*

New technologies have enabled us to learn, work, and grow in ways that were unimaginable just a few years ago, and modern media has brought culture, entertainment, and education to a wider audience than ever

before. With this great power, there also comes an enormous responsibility to ensure that parents have the tools they need so that the movies children watch, the music they listen to, and the video games they play reflect the values that parents want to pass on to their children.

Too often today children are exposed to images that glamorize violence and desensitize children to it. Numerous studies have shown that this kind of violent programming can promote violent tendencies in children. Media violence increases children's aggression towards others and promotes the development of a sense of callousness towards violence. And such programming can have a particularly negative effect on children who are already vulnerable.

My Administration has worked hard to give parents the information they need to make the right choices for their children. My Administration has brought about a breakthrough agreement by the television industry to create a content-based voluntary ratings system that informs viewers of the appropriateness of the programs they watch. Along with the V-Chip, this rating system will enable parents to choose the programs their children watch, and allow them to better control the images to which their children are exposed.

Today, the motion picture, recording, and video game industries also use content-based ratings to improve the choices parents have. If, however, these industries market violent or other inappropriate materials, rated for adults, to children, then they undermine the effective functioning of the ratings systems. And the industries make it harder for parents to control the movies, music, and games to which their children are exposed.

Therefore, I am requesting that the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice to conduct a study on the marketing practices of the motion picture, recording, and video game industries with regard to material rated for adults to determine whether and to what extent these industries market such material to children. Among other matters, the study should examine whether such violent material rated for adults is advertised or promoted in media outlets in which minors comprise a substantial per-

centage of the audience. The study also should examine whether these advertisements are intended to and in fact attract underage audiences.

As a result of this study, we will learn more about how violence is marketed to our children. I thank you for your efforts in this area and your attention to this project.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Attorney General Janet Reno and Chairman Robert Pitofsky of the Federal Trade Commission.

### **Statement on the Resignation of Mark D. Gearan as Director of the Peace Corps**

*June 1, 1999*

Today I am announcing that my good friend and trusted adviser Mark Gearan will be leaving his position as the Director of the Peace Corps later this summer. Mark has accepted the exciting challenge of serving as the next president of Hobart and William Smith Colleges, one of our Nation's most distinguished academic institutions. The trustees of the colleges have made a very wise decision in selecting Mark Gearan as their new president. He is gifted, humane, a leader, and deeply committed to the education of young people. I know that he will bring great vision to the colleges as they enter the next century.

I have relied on Mark Gearan's skills, wisdom, and talents for many years. He was a close aide to me from the time I first sought the Presidency; he served as Vice President Gore's campaign manager in the 1992 election; and he served me in the White House as Deputy Chief of Staff and Director of Communications.

One of the best personnel decisions I have made as President was to appoint Mark Gearan as the Director of the Peace Corps. I believe he has been one of the most successful Directors since President Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961. He has rejuvenated the Peace Corps and demonstrated a deep commitment to its legacy of service and the women and men who serve