

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 19, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

---

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT  
ON HIS  
MESSAGE ON CRIME

THE BRIEFING ROOM

3:32 P.M. EDT

Mr. Attorney General, two months ago, at Yale University Law School, I spoke about a subject that touches the lives of all Americans -- crime.

Today, I am sending to the Congress a special message spelling out in concrete terms the program for curbing crime and insuring domestic tranquility, which I advocated in that speech.

First, and foremost, our effort should be directed toward the protection of law-abiding citizens. For too long, the law has centered its attention more on the rights of the criminal than on the victim of crime.

It is high time that we reverse this trend and put the highest priority on the victims and potential victims.

Even though the chief responsibility in combating crime lies with State and local officials, the Federal Government can provide leadership. It can improve the quality of existing Federal laws and the Federal judicial system.

It can enact and vigorously enforce new laws governing criminal conduct at the Federal level, and it can provide financial and technical assistance to State and local governments in their efforts to stem lawlessness.

For example, I propose that the Congress enact mandatory prison sentences for Federal offenses committed with firearms or other dangerous weapons, and for highjackers, kidnappers, traffickers in hard drugs and repeated Federal offenders who commit crimes of violence.

I urge State and local authorities to take similar steps.

MORE

I am unalterably opposed to Federal registration of guns or gun owners. I do propose that the Congress enact legislation to deal with those who use handguns for criminal purposes.

I also propose further Federal restrictions on so-called Saturday night specials.

We can and must make our legal system what it was always intended, a means of insuring domestic tranquility in making America safe for decent and law-abiding citizens.

This is a matter of deep personal concern to all Americans. So, I urge the Congress to reflect this concern for the victims of crime by acting on this message in a prompt, positive and nonpartisan spirit.

To provide more details concerning the message and the program that we have put together, I will now ask the Attorney General, Mr. Edward Levi, to fill you in on the details.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 3:35 P.M. EDT)