

stubborn and serious problems. Because of the energy and the effort of the American people, as I said, the crime rate is dropping, the welfare rolls have dropped dramatically, and poverty is down. We can meet our challenges if we'll meet them together, in our homes, our communities, and as a nation. But let me be clear: The teen pregnancy rate is still intolerably high in America. Too many children are still having children. So we must do more. As I enter my second term, I want to tell you the new and comprehensive steps my administration will take to further reduce the number of out-of-wedlock births.

First, we'll step up support for programs at the local level that work, providing \$7½ million for pioneering programs like the one at Emory University in Atlanta, where young people teach their peers about abstinence and responsibility.

Second, we'll spread the word about these programs so that what works in one community can be tried quickly in more communities.

Third, we'll forge even stronger partnerships with businesses, clergy, and community groups who are committed to dealing with this issue.

And fourth, we'll see to it that we use the most up-to-date research methods to track teen pregnancy trends. We have to make sure our efforts are actually paying off.

Finally, we'll carry out the strong provisions of the welfare reform law I signed last year, which requires teen mothers who receive welfare not only to stay in school but to live at home or in an adult-supervised setting. It sets

up second-chance homes where young mothers who can't go home still have a safe place to raise a child and turn their lives around. And it institutes the toughest ever child support measures.

We've made some significant progress in the effort against teen pregnancy in the last few years. With the new steps I'm announcing today, we'll continue our fight against children having children. All of you need to help us send the strongest possible message: It's wrong to be pregnant or father a child unless you are married and ready to take on the responsibilities of parenthood.

What we're doing to prevent teen pregnancy as a nation is an example of how we can master many of the challenges of our time. The National Government cannot solve all our problems, but it can help by giving individuals, families, and communities the tools they need to take responsibility and solve those problems for themselves.

As President, I'm committed to marshaling all the forces in our society to mobilizing our citizens, our communities, our businesses, our schools to meet our challenges. That is the way we will keep the promise of America alive for all our citizens as we move into the 21st century.

Thanks for listening, and Happy New Year.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Mahogany Run Golf Course in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.

Statement on the Decline in Serious Crime

January 5, 1997

These new FBI statistics show that for the fifth year in a row, serious crime in this country has declined. This is the longest period of decline in over 25 years.

At the beginning of my administration, we set out to change this country's approach to crime by putting more officers on our streets through community policing and taking guns out of the hands of criminals. We are making a difference. Today, our neighborhoods are safer, and we are restoring the American people's confidence that crime can be reduced.

But our work is not done. We must continue to move in the right direction by adding more police officers, cracking down on gangs, and reducing gun and drug violence. That is why I have placed curbing juvenile violence at the top of my anticrime agenda for the new year.

NOTE: This statement was embargoed for release until 6 p.m.