

programs to keep kids out of trouble in the first place. And I would like to say a special word of appreciation to law enforcement for proving that Joe and Chuck and I were right. You see a guy like Joe Biden up here, full of enthusiasm—wouldn't it break your heart if it turned out to be wrong? What kind of speech—can you imagine him giving a hang-dog speech? It would have been terrible. [Laughter]

So I want to thank you. I want to thank you for a lot of things, for staying with us with the assault weapons ban, for staying with us with the Brady bill, which has now kept a quarter of a million—a quarter of a million—felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting handguns. I want to thank you for proving that there are people like Irma Rivera out there in America—all over America—who want to wear uniforms and make the streets safer and give our kids their futures back. She was terrific, wasn't she? Let's give her another hand. [Applause] Thank you.

So we're very happy. If you look there at the reduction in crime on that chart, you see that crime rates overall have dropped to a 25-year low; property crime down; violent crimes declined 20 percent in the last 6 years. The murder rate is at its lowest level nationwide in 30 years, mostly due to the dropping number of young people with guns. We can take a lot of pride in what has happened and in the strategy that has brought it about.

We have seen the impact of more police. We've seen the impact of the prevention programs, of the penalties, the efforts to get guns out of the hands of criminals, the burning out of the crack epidemic, thank the Lord. And we've seen greater peace of mind coming, probably more than anything else, from the presence of the police on the street, in the neighborhood, in a preventive, cooperative fashion. And that is very, very good.

Now, having said all that, I want to go back to a point Senator Biden made. Dealing with crime, now that it's down, is kind of like dealing with the economy. We've got the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years. But it doesn't mean anything to somebody without a job or to a depressed neighborhood. And given how volatile things are in the world—all you have to do is pick up the paper every day and read about it—we've got to stay on the economy.

The same thing is true of crime, except in some ways more so, because, yes, the crime

rate is the lowest it's been in 30 years, and you heard the Attorney General say that means there will be under 3 million victims. Three million people is a lot of people—3 million families, 3 million friends. I don't know anyone who seriously believes that we have a country as safe as it ought to be. I don't know anyone who seriously believes that we're saving every young person and keeping them out of trouble in the first place. I don't know anyone who seriously believes that we can be the kind of country we want to be if we have to continue these levels of incarceration, if we have to continue spending more and more money on prisons that we ought to be spending on education, on after-school programs, on summer school programs, on keeping these kids out of trouble in the first place.

So I say, in spite of all this celebration, what we should do is to say, "Okay, we know what works. Now let's bear down and keep doing it until we have got this problem as small as it can possibly be." No serious person thinks that we are there. So, for my money, what we ought to be doing today is saying, "Hallelujah, this works! Now let's keep on doing it until we have squeezed every last drop of possibility for peace and security out of this strategy."

We are, as you have heard, on time, ahead of schedule, under budget with the 100,000 police program. In fact, we have already funded more than 92,000 of the 100,000 community police. We will fund them all in the near future, and that is very, very encouraging.

Now, we also have to deal with the fact—you heard Senator Biden mention this—that our community policing effort is set to expire in the year 2000. I still believe we need to do more. It's still dangerous work; 155 of your colleagues lost their lives in the last year. It's still a numbers game in some places.

When we started this 100,000 police program, the violent crime rate had tripled in the previous 30 years, but the size of the police forces, in the aggregate, had gone up only 10 percent. So we got the violent crime rate and the overall crime rate coming down, but there's still not an intersection. In other words, the police force is going from 500,000 to 600,000—that's a 20 percent increase—but we still need to do more.

Now, today I came here to say that in my balanced budget proposal to the Congress, which I will unveil at the State of the Union Address, we will have nearly \$1.3 billion, an