

## Rothman, Bipartisan Coalition, Encourage President to Protect School Kids from Guns

March 9, 2001

Rothman, Bipartisan Coalition, Encourage  
President to Protect School Kids from Guns

Washington, DC -- In the wake of an unending series of violent tragedies and near-misses in schools across America, a bipartisan coalition led by Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) and Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI) has written President Bush to ask him to give local school districts a way of protecting their students. The coalition asked the President to include funding for Rothman's bill, the Secure Our Schools Act, in his FY 2002 budget.

"We cannot stand idly by while some troubled students bring bombs and guns into America's classrooms. We need to give local school districts the ability to protect our children from violence," Rothman said. "I am pleased with the bipartisan support for the Secure Our Schools Act. I believe it is vitally important that we let the American people know the safety of our children is not a partisan issue. Thirty years ago, we as a society decided guns must not be allowed on planes. Our children deserve the same protection."

"Department of Education studies show that of the 88,223 elementary and secondary schools in the United States, 84% have low security. School violence has increased dramatically in recent years. Just this week, the Nation witnessed a tragedy in California, and near tragedy elsewhere. Our children are our most precious resource, and I join my colleagues in calling upon President Bush to see that essential funding is available to keep our children safe at school," Sensenbrenner said.

The Secure Our Schools Act is designed to help any school in America that requests funds to install metal detectors, security cameras, train personnel or take other steps to keep their schools safe and secure. The program is authorized to give \$90 million in funding for school security grants over the next three years. The security measures are not mandated by the federal government on local schools, instead if local school boards choose to, they can receive federal funds for locally selected security measures. It is the first federal program designed solely to address the issue of school security. Rothman introduced the Secure Our Schools Act in April, 2000 while meeting with students at an anti-violence rally in Fort Lee (NJ) High School. The measure unanimously passed by the House Judiciary Committee and later passed as part of the Violence Against Women Act a few weeks later, which passed Congress in October, 2000 and was then signed into law by President Clinton.

###

[Go back](#)