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JANET RENO

6

ABA DISPUTE RESOLUTION CONFERENCE

7

HYATT REGENCY

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CRYSTAL CITY, VIRGINIA

9

JUNE 7, 1996

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1                   MS. RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon,  
2       ladies and gentlemen. My name is Raquel  
3       Rodriguez. I'm the chairperson of the ABA  
4       Young Lawyers Division.

5                   It is my privilege and honor this  
6       afternoon to present to you a fellow Miamian,  
7       the Attorney General of the United States, who,  
8       prior to becoming Attorney General in 1993, was  
9       the state attorney for Dade County for many  
10      years.

11                  Although she was initially appointed  
12      by our Governor in 1978, afterwards, she was  
13      re-elected overwhelmingly five times. For  
14      anyone who is familiar with our community, in  
15      Dade County, you know that it is one of the  
16      most politically and culturally diverse  
17      communities in the country.

18                  But there is always one thing we

19       could all agree on, and that was that we wanted  
20       Janet Reno as our state attorney.

21                   Ever since the late 1970s and early  
22       '80s, Ms. Reno has been extremely consistent in

3

1       her observations of the need to start with  
2       children when they are young. And I remember  
3       her saying at all of these meetings, "You can't  
4       wait until they're 12 years old or 14 years old  
5       to start. You have to start at a young age."

6                   And I'm happy to see that the rest of  
7       us are now catching up with her. She is an  
8       excellent role model for all of us as attorneys  
9       and an excellent role model for our children.

10                   Ladies and gentlemen, the Attorney  
11       General.

12                   (Applause)

13                   ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Thank you so  
14       much, Raquel Rodriguez. And thank you, Judge  
15       Harris and Mr. Davidson, for your great work.

16 Thank you all for your commitment to showing  
17 people how we can resolve conflicts without  
18 knives and guns and fists and how we can  
19 problem solve working together. You are an  
20 example for all lawyers.

21 And I, as Ms. Rodriguez says, have  
22 had a focus on children. And I particularly

4

1 appreciate this conference and your work.

2 I'd like to put it in context, to  
3 talk about where we're at, and what we're  
4 talking about in terms of --

5 (Interruptions)

6 Can you hear me now? Well, this is  
7 going to be short. How's that?

8 Sometimes, we get involved in what  
9 we're doing and we don't see ourselves in terms  
10 of a bigger picture. Yesterday, I was in  
11 Boston to focus on what Boston was doing about  
12 youth violence, since they seem to have been

13       able to come together better than many cities.

14               There was a district judge who worked  
15       with the local hospital. The local hospital  
16       had developed a program for children who were  
17       witnesses to violence, in order to teach them  
18       how to cope and to address issues of conflict  
19       resolution, to and address issues of how to  
20       cope with conflict.

21               There was a Youth Violence Task Force  
22       headed by a lieutenant who worked with street

5  
1       workers in not only reaching out to enforce the  
2       very serious offenders, but to work with other  
3       offenders to resolve their conflicts  
4       peacefully, and to pull them back from drugs  
5       and gangs.

6               It was so exciting to see a community  
7       start to blend together. And it made me think,  
8       as I thought about what I was going to say to  
9       you today, that we have to look at the context

10       that we're in.

11                   We look at more and more children  
12       born into families that don't know how to cope  
13       from the day the child is born: A crack  
14       addict, a mother who is overwhelmed, a single  
15       parent struggling to make ends meet and not  
16       knowing how to cope without extended family.

17                   And I have never appreciated it as  
18       much in understanding what infancy to 3 years  
19       old means, as I have now at a distance from  
20       observing my great-niece and great-nephew, ages  
21       2 and 4. And when they come to visit me, or  
22       when I come home for that brief visit, they

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1       watch how conflict is resolved by a parent who  
2       is with them every hour of the day if their  
3       grandparents aren't there, and to see what can  
4       be done from an early age.

5                   But too many children in America do  
6       not have that now, do not have that nurturing,

7 do not have that bonding. They just don't have  
8 anything in their lives in those early years.

9 It is worth sharing with you -- and  
10 some of you have heard these figures -- what  
11 the child development experts in our largest  
12 hospital in Miami told me. I tried to figure  
13 out what to do about crack-involved infants and  
14 their mothers.

15 They pointed out to me that 50  
16 percent of all learned human response is  
17 learned in the first year of life, that the  
18 concept of reward and punishment and a  
19 conscience is developed during the first three  
20 years of life.

21 It is very difficult to address your  
22 tasks with a 6 year-old, or a 9 year-old or a

7

1 12 year-old, if they did not have a strong  
2 foundation formed in those first three years.  
3 That's the reason I have been such a major

4       proponent of what I call "educare" and a major  
5       proponent of the school system recognizing that  
6       if we're not to put all our monies into  
7       remedial programs, we have to develop  
8       comprehensive educational programs for our  
9       early years, if we are going to make a  
10      difference.

11                   So as you approach this task, you  
12      can't start too young. I think we can learn a  
13      lot as we learn through educare facilities, and  
14      through programs where children witness  
15      violence. I would urge you to go back to your  
16      community and talk to police officers who form  
17      safe street units, talk with the local hospital  
18      and public health specialist, and see what can  
19      be done to focus on youngsters who are the  
20      witnesses to violence, to see if we can't make  
21      difference both in dealing with the trauma of  
22      the violence, and in teaching them and then the



1 whole family how to resolve without conflict.

2 This is particularly necessary in  
3 whole area of domestic violence. Clearly,  
4 violence is a learned behavior. And one of the  
5 best places to learn it in America today is in  
6 the home; we have watched over the years an  
7 escalation of domestic violence.

8 There are monies that you may be able  
9 to tap into that can make a difference in this  
10 area. This past year, through the Violence  
11 Against Women Act, we were able to distribute  
12 \$425,000 to each state. For some states, that  
13 is just a drop in the bucket, but it was meant  
14 as a down payment.

15 This year, we will distribute \$130  
16 million to all the states with each state  
17 guaranteed a minimum amount. This money is to  
18 be distributed through the State Criminal  
19 Justice Councils in each state. But I urge you  
20 to look into that, to see what could be done to  
21 develop a component of domestic violence that's

22 focused on resolving the conflict that children

9

1 see and the trauma that children see, and  
2 teaching the family, as a whole, how to work  
3 through that violence and to move ahead with a  
4 particular focus on children.

5 As we watch children grow older,  
6 though, as we watch them come to school, we  
7 also learn startling things. A 1992 study  
8 conducted by the Carnegie Foundation determined  
9 that only 60 percent of an adolescence  
10 non-sleeping time is taken up by school,  
11 homework, chores, meals, or employment.

12 Many adolescents spend the remaining  
13 40 percent of their non-sleeping time alone or  
14 with peers without adult supervision or with  
15 adults who may negatively influence their  
16 lives. It is no surprise, therefore, that we  
17 see juvenile and conflict escalating  
18 immediately after the school doors close at

19        3:00 in the afternoon.

20                    The more recent Carnegie Foundation  
21        reports says that children are more alone and  
22        unsupervised than at any time in our history,

10

1        and more children are at a risk for so many  
2        factors, whether it be drugs, alcohol, or  
3        whether it be conflict itself.

4                    How do we develop programs that can  
5        focus on these kids? I urge you to link with  
6        youth services authorities and with schools in  
7        terms of developing programs that can focus on  
8        those children in after-hours programs. If the  
9        school doesn't have it, find out what we can do  
10       in terms of teaching conflict resolution, in  
11       terms of mediating disputes, in terms of  
12       working out neighborhood problems, in those  
13       after-hour times. It becomes increasingly  
14       critical if we are to address the problem as a  
15       whole.

16 But what I urge you to do is to look  
17 at the whole picture. What has troubled me so  
18 often in these last years, as I've grappled  
19 with the issue of children, is that somebody  
20 will develop a perfectly wonderful program over  
21 here. They will have thought it out. They  
22 will develop it. They will implement it. It

11  
1 will be well thought out, but then there won't  
2 be anything else to go with it.

3 There won't be other afternoon  
4 programs. There won't be positive activities.  
5 You will teach them to resolve conflict. But  
6 then they go out and they're alone, they are  
7 unsupervised, and your work goes for naught.

8 Or perhaps there will not be a  
9 truancy prevention program that gets them back  
10 into school, or there will be substandard  
11 housing, or there will be a drug problem in the  
12 family that can't be addressed. We need to

13 look at the whole picture.

14 And as you return to your  
15 communities, I would urge you to figure out how  
16 your community can reweave the fabric of  
17 society around all our children in a  
18 comprehensive way, with the schools, the  
19 police. The police functioning both from the  
20 law enforcement prospective, as well as from  
21 the prevention perspective. Parks and  
22 recreation specialists can be wonderful allies

12  
1 in your endeavors. The business sector can be  
2 a marvelous ally.

3 One of the complaints that I get from  
4 the business sector, for example, when they  
5 talk to me about giving young people job  
6 opportunities is, "Janet, they don't know how  
7 to get to work on time. When they get to work,  
8 they don't know how to take instruction, and  
9 when they get frustrated, they act out, and

10       they get mad at everybody, and they don't know  
11       how to work with others."

12                   This is a wonderful setting to  
13       demonstrate what we can do in terms of  
14       problem-solving and conflict resolution in that  
15       type of setting.

16                   And for example, yesterday in Boston,  
17       I was told of a program that John Hancock had  
18       developed with the Boston Police Department  
19       that provided for a summer of opportunity.  
20       Young people who had been in a program,  
21       supervised by community police officers and by  
22       probation officers, developed the idea that

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1       these children needed job opportunities as  
2       well.

3                   But they didn't need just job  
4       opportunities, they needed life skills to  
5       prepare them for job opportunities. So for six  
6       weeks, children were brought to the John

7        Hancock Program, given these life skills, and  
8        taught how to interview. And just think what  
9        could happen if we had a conflict resolution  
10       and a mediation component to that, and what we  
11       could teach children to do in terms of  
12       preparing them for job opportunities.

13                Then they take those skills that have  
14       been developed during the summer program, and  
15       provide an internship for the remainder of the  
16       school that follows from October through May,  
17       in a program that works from about 3:30 in the  
18       afternoon until 7:00 at night.

19                Again, if we look at our work in the  
20       context of the whole, we can make it ever so  
21       much more effective.

22                President Clinton has made a

1       commitment to put 100,000 community police  
2       officers on the streets of America. We have  
3       17,000 on the streets now; 43,000 are

14

4       authorized. And it so exciting to travel this  
5       nation and to see the difference that these  
6       police officers are making.

7                   What if you came to those police  
8       officers and said, "We would like to work with  
9       you. In developing skills, you can teach us  
10      something about policing, and how we may be  
11      supportive of you. And we can teach you  
12      something about how to work with children in  
13      helping them resolve their conflicts peacefully  
14      instead of getting into gang fights"?

15                  I urge you to contact your local  
16      police department and see if they have a  
17      community policing component or a DARE  
18      component where you could provide extraordinary  
19      benefits based on your knowledge and your  
20      experience. There is so much that can be done  
21      if we look at the problem as a whole.

22                  But even then people are telling me,



1        "It just won't work. It's too big. My one  
2        program can't make a difference." I have now  
3        had the opportunity to travel across the  
4        country, to listen to the concerns of young  
5        people, to talk to people about what's working  
6        and not working. And I can tell you that what  
7        you do is making a difference. And I see it  
8        happening.

9                    I have never felt so encouraged. I  
10        have never felt so sure that we could turn the  
11        problem of youth violence around and that we  
12        could give our children a future as I have  
13        during these last six months.

14                   As I have seen community after  
15        community come together, trying to fit all the  
16        pieces of the puzzle together in a whole that  
17        can truly make a difference.

18                   But I've heard of specific programs  
19        that are working, where those that have been  
20        the beneficiary and those who have watched the  
21        program in action tell me it is making a  
22        difference.

1                   For example, young people in the "We  
2   Can Work It Out School Program," developed by  
3   the National Institute for Citizen Education  
4   and the Law and the National Crime Prevention  
5   Council, are making a difference.

6                   Because of their peer mediation  
7   program, they have reduced school suspensions,  
8   detention, and expulsion. They've decreased  
9   the need for teacher involvement in student  
10   conflicts. And they have improved the climate  
11   in the school.

12                  The New Haven Child Development  
13   Policing Program is another example of  
14   community policing working, with real experts  
15   in the area. These officers are working with  
16   children and their families to prevent the  
17   violence in the first place.

18                  In Miami, I listened to a public  
19   health nurse tell me that, 30 years ago, she

20       used to go knock on the lady's door, the lady  
21       would invite her in for a cup of coffee, and  
22       she would tell this brand new mother about

17  
1       infant feeding, about formulas, about nurturing  
2       and bonding, as they sat around the breakfast  
3       table.

4                   She said, "I'm afraid to go anymore."  
5       And it gave me the idea, why don't I develop a  
6       team of a community police officer, a public  
7       health nurse, and a youth counselor, who can  
8       make the home visit together to find out why  
9       the child might be truant, or what problems  
10      might have developed, or has what caused the  
11      conflict?    That was very successful as I was  
12      leaving, despite Hurricane Andrew.

13                  But the major conflict that had  
14      developed, and where they so needed help in  
15      that particular context, was they were getting  
16      calls from the mother of the teenager.   And the

17 conflict existed between mother and son, and  
18 they didn't know how to resolve it.

19 Again, your work could become such a  
20 marvelous component of what so many people face  
21 in these communities.

22 Similarly, Big Brothers and Big

18

1 Sisters are giving youth at risk someone to  
2 talk to and guide them into adulthood. This  
3 program has made young people less likely to  
4 start using drugs and alcohol, less likely to  
5 hit someone, improved their school attendance  
6 and performance, and improved their peer and  
7 family relationships.

8 There are programs that are working.  
9 And we are trying to build on that through the  
10 National Juvenile Justice Action Plan, in which  
11 we have tried to describe the threads that are  
12 necessary to pull all of this together.

13 One of our objectives is to provide

14 opportunities for young people to engage in  
15 positive activities, to make sure that there is  
16 someplace to go to and someone to talk to. We  
17 can, again, make a difference, if there's a  
18 mentor. But if you teach that mentor and if  
19 you develop, with a mentoring program in your  
20 community, the skills that you possess, you can  
21 enhance that mentor's ability to help that  
22 child cope with growing up.

19

1 Just last week, I participated in  
2 what I thought was one of the great examples of  
3 new technology and what it can do. The Office  
4 of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention  
5 sponsored a national satellite teleconference  
6 on conflict resolution programming and school,  
7 community, and juvenile justice settings.

8 This satellite teleconference  
9 provided information to over 485 sites and  
10 approximately 10,000 participants on conflict

11 resolution programs that have reduced the  
12 number of violent juvenile acts in schools,  
13 homes and neighborhoods, decreased the number  
14 of chronic school absences, reduced the number  
15 of disciplinary referrals and the suspensions,  
16 and increased academic instruction during the  
17 school day.

18 I was on the hook-up for a bit by  
19 telephone. And it was so interesting to hear  
20 from people around the country who had either  
21 started or wanted information on how to get  
22 conflict resolution and peer mediation programs

20

1 started.

2 For those who had started, they were  
3 so encouraged. But they were already branching  
4 out to other parts of the community, what can I  
5 do to get this student back into the mainstream  
6 of education? What can I do about truancy  
7 prevention? What can I do to teach somebody

8       about job skills?

9                   And you realize that when we talk  
10       about these issues, we've got to look at the  
11       problem as a whole, and we've got to teach that  
12       child problem-solving skills.

13                   It is exciting, though, to see how  
14       people are relating together, to see the ABA  
15       and the AMA come together to talk about what we  
16       can do in the area of youth violence, what we  
17       can do in the area of domestic violence, and to  
18       see so many people focused on this issue and  
19       willing to make a difference.

20                   One of the areas that I urge you to  
21       concentrate on is developing evaluation  
22       techniques that can ensure that what you're

21

1       doing is in the right direction. I've seen  
2       some conflict resolution programs just kind of  
3       develop like out of whole cloth, without too  
4       many people giving too much thought to what the

5 best way to do it is.

6 Set yourselves some standards,  
7 understand research that is being done in the  
8 area, find out what other programs are doing,  
9 and see if you are truly making a difference.  
10 And if you are, then share. Share with others  
11 because that is we are really building, I  
12 think, success in this country.

13 But there's still going to be  
14 children and trouble. They're still going to  
15 be children who hurt each other.

16 One of the most tragic programs that  
17 I saw developed -- and I have been told that it  
18 is no longer -- but one area that I ask you to  
19 focus on is in the older children who are  
20 victims of violence.

21 I went to a hospital, while I was in  
22 Washington, to an emergency room where there

1 was a high incidence of youth violence victims,



2       and they were mostly teenagers. Those victims  
3       were going to be perpetrators in another three  
4       to four weeks, when they got out of the  
5       hospital and got mad with each other and went  
6       back and sought retribution.

7               This is a perfect place to intervene,  
8       if we could develop with doctors, with nurses,  
9       with schools, a comprehensive intervention  
10      program for victims.

11             I just cannot tell you how much I  
12      admire what you do. I want to be as supportive  
13      as I can. One of the things I never liked was  
14      for the federal government to come to town, to  
15      tell me what to do without asking me in the  
16      first place what our ideas were, because we  
17      understood our needs and resources far better  
18      than the federal government did.

19             I'd like to take this time to answer  
20      any questions you might have but, more  
21      importantly, to hear from you who are on the  
22      front line, what we might do in the Department

1 of Justice to better support your efforts both  
2 in this area and in any other area that you  
3 might think of.

4 I come away with a great wealth of  
5 information that I think has helped shape much  
6 of what the Department is doing. And I would  
7 be very grateful for your answer to this  
8 question, If you were the Attorney General of  
9 the United States, what would you do to  
10 improve --

11 (Laughter)

12 -- conflict resolution amongst  
13 children, and address the issue of children as  
14 a whole? Now, don't be shy.

15 (Laughter)

16 I always wanted this opportunity with  
17 an Attorney General.

18 (Laughter)

19 PARTICIPANT: Would you tell us how

20 the ABA can get involved in the consortium that  
21 other (inaudible) around the issue of conflict  
22 resolution in the schools?

24  
1 ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Just tell me  
2 who to have to call tomorrow.

3 PARTICIPANT: Jack Hanna. He's the  
4 staff representative on dispute.

5 ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Jack, you'll  
6 give me your number, before I leave.

7 MR. HANNA: Oh, yes.

8 (Laughter)

9 PARTICIPANT: It seems like we're  
10 repeating that question from this morning, but  
11 much of what I do is in frustration in dealing  
12 with kids. Some of their basic need aren't  
13 met. And we create programs, and put money  
14 into it, and we don't do things like get them  
15 clothing, get them food, and get them more  
16 child care.

17                   And I think we structure programs  
18       around professionals more than we do around  
19       needs of the kids. I guess the question is,  
20       how can you, on a federal level, break down in  
21       the perception that poor kids are undeserving?  
22                   We're fighting ten years of rhetoric

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1       from President Reagan about the undeserving  
2       welfare mother and, now, the undeserving  
3       neglected child. It's an oxymoron. The child  
4       is in the dependency system. The child is  
5       dependent on us.

6                   And I think the federal government  
7       needs to do something to say it's okay to  
8       support kids. Give them the help that they  
9       need, including food, clothing, shelter, and  
10       direct services.

11                   ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Here is the  
12       message that I have conveyed from the time I  
13       took office to a major businessman's council,

14 and even last night, to the Hartford Downtown  
15 Business Council.

16 The first way I sell the idea that we  
17 have got to make an investment in children is  
18 to talk about how the doctors took me to our  
19 public hospital, to look at the crack-involved  
20 infants, and taught me about how much is  
21 learned in the first three years of life.

22 And my response was "What good are

26

1 all the prisons going to be 15 years from now  
2 if the child doesn't understand the concept of  
3 punishment and hasn't developed a conscience?"

4 And then I say to them, "if you live  
5 behind a stone wall in a gated community and  
6 you don't think crime is a problem, what good  
7 -- you are not going to have a work force in  
8 15, in 20 years, even in 5 years if we don't  
9 make an investment in children, in the whole  
10 child, and develop in these children the skills

11       necessary to fill the jobs to maintain America  
12       as a first-rate nation.

13                   Then I ran into senior citizens who  
14       used to say, "Janet, you're a nice girl, and I  
15       know you like children --"

16                               (Laughter)

17                   "-- but I've done my part. I've sent  
18       my sons to college. I sent my grandsons to  
19       college. I've even helped with my  
20       great-grandsons. I don't want to be bothered  
21       anymore."

22                               (Laughter)

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1                   And my response to them is, "Our  
2       pensions are not going to be worth the paper  
3       they're written on if we don't make an  
4       investment in a workforce that can fuel the  
5       economy and that can maintain those pensions."

6                   Then I get some doctors that say,  
7       "I've got a middle-class practice. I don't

8        have to worry about it." And I say, "Health  
9        care institutions will be brought to their  
10       knees unless we make an investment in  
11       preventative medical care and a life that can  
12       give a child a chance to grow in a strong and  
13       healthy way."

14                    And it is fascinating to me. It was  
15       fascinating last night, with an audience  
16       composed primarily of businessmen. They  
17       understand this.

18                    We've got to make that message heard  
19       loud and clear here. They laughed at me when I  
20       first took office, but nobody has called me a  
21       social worker recently. And I think more and  
22       more people are beginning to understand. But

28

1       we still have a long way to go, and the  
2       requires that all of us speak out.

3                    But I think what you put your finger  
4       on, what the problem is, and that's the reason

5 I talked earlier about the need for a  
6 comprehensive approach, and that your conflict  
7 resolution program and other children advocacy  
8 issues won't make any difference if there are  
9 other essentials in that child's life that are  
10 omitted.

11 Each community is going to be  
12 different because there may be a private,  
13 not-for-profit that performs a function in one  
14 community but not in another. And one of the  
15 ways that I see is just demonstrating to people  
16 how cost-effective it is to make an investment  
17 early on in children, whether it be clothes, or  
18 housing, or conflict resolution, or educare, or  
19 afternoon and evening programs. And the money  
20 we eventually save shows the the necessity for  
21 developing that comprehensive approach.

22 That's what impressed me so much

1 about Boston and what Boston is doing. It



2       still has a way to go, but it is the most  
3       comprehensive approach that I have seen. And  
4       what they have done with the Justice's  
5       Department money, for its comprehensive  
6       community program, is take that and develop a  
7       youth services network in which a number of  
8       different agencies are involved.

9               And the community policy officers are  
10      linked into that network. If they find a child  
11      adrift, in need of a particular service, they  
12      know where to call and what to do. There's a  
13      case management component built into it. My  
14      question was, "The police call. How do we know  
15      the child doesn't fall between the crack of the  
16      17 or 18 different service agencies"?

17             We follow up and we have a case  
18      manager that follows up with community programs  
19      to see that it's happening. It's not perfect.  
20      But the more that we can focus on  
21      neighborhoods, on particular communities as  
22      parts of cities, the greater difference that we

1       can make.

2                   I'd like the Bar Association, too, to  
3       consider a concept that I think is going to  
4       become an almost everyday concept, and that's  
5       community-based justice, particularly for areas  
6       that have a high incidence of delinquency and  
7       abuse, a high incidence of domestic violence,  
8       and have a judge, a community prosecutor,  
9       community probation officers, community police  
10      officers linked with businesses in the  
11      community to provide these services and to  
12      ensure, both in a court setting and in  
13      community initiatives, that these services are  
14      provided.

15                  There is so much that we can do.  
16      It's not going to happen overnight. But the  
17      difference that exists between now and three  
18      and a half years ago, in this nation, is enough  
19      to give me great encouragement that it will  
20      happen.

21                   You're going to have to continue to  
22       speak out loud and long. And the best way to

31  
1       get people to invest is to show them that  
2       they're going to have a great return on their  
3       investment if they do it now, and a lousy  
4       return if they wait until the crisis occurs.

5                   PARTICIPANT: First of all, thank you  
6       for the question. I appreciate it.

7                   I'm with a group in San Francisco.  
8       We've always done parent-child abuse. But  
9       recently, we've been working with parents and  
10      children, with youth who have been involved  
11      with problems that have gotten them into  
12      juvenile hall, perhaps arrested, perhaps in  
13      coming out of the county juvenile facility.

14                  It's a wonderful time to get the  
15      attention of a family and talk about what's  
16      going to happen next.

17                  So, again, it goes to tying in

18 conflict resolution, and support to the family  
19 as the family -- the young person, particularly  
20 -- is coming out of a situation.

21 The other thing is a that lot of work  
22 is done in conflict resolution with youth is

32

1 sort of youth-directed. There's a real  
2 different mix directed towards single or  
3 smaller groups. There's a possibility to  
4 combine youth organizing and conflict  
5 resolution in our families.

6 We're really beginning to help youth  
7 organize around their own issues, and come to  
8 grips, and negotiating with others, including  
9 adults, for their own needs which is real  
10 interesting. I know they call it "violence  
11 prevention." I think that word is overused a  
12 bit. You could say "conflict resolution" in  
13 the same sentence.

14 Well, we want to respectfully ask

15        what you think should be done. And we've used  
16        community mediations before, but it makes  
17        mediation very broad if you simply say to us  
18        make agreements.

19                    My question is, we're also working on  
20        community policing. I've been looking to find  
21        out where does one go, perhaps, to the federal  
22        government courts in this area in tying

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1        together community policing and community  
2        conflict resolution. I don't see where you can  
3        go, or where there's funding for it.

4                    ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Let me get  
5        our card and see what we can do in terms of  
6        tying -- a year ago, I could have told you  
7        where to go.

8                    (Laughter)

9                    Congress changed it a little bit.  
10       But there's going to be some block grant money  
11       coming that's available to local police

12 agencies. And let me get you -- the parameters  
13 of that have not been precisely defined yet.  
14 We're trying to work through the issues because  
15 it's just part of the appropriations bill  
16 that's passed.

17                   If you have a county, and then 26  
18 different municipalities in the county, how  
19 does the money get down? Does it have to have  
20 county agreement? We're working out the  
21 regulations.

22                   But that can be used for crime

34

1 prevention. And I think you would find a  
2 number of police agencies that would be anxious  
3 to participate.

4                   But let me find other dollar sources  
5 to link you with community policing, and the  
6 conflict resolution area.

7                   I think, on the community  
8 organization or youth organization issue, you

9       have come to a critical point.

10                   If the children are as alone and as  
11       isolated as the Carnegie Foundation suggests,  
12       they are gravitating towards the only people  
13       that they're around, which are their peers.

14                   And the peers or adults that are  
15       oftentimes pulling them are pulling into gangs.  
16       And it is very disconcerting, for example, to  
17       see the enticement of the gang, see them form  
18       gangs because they don't think -- the gang  
19       leaders who are adults don't think anything is  
20       going to happen to the juvenile, and they just  
21       throw the juvenile -- the juvenile is a throw  
22       away.

35

1                   If we can use all the techniques that  
2       are at our disposal and develop organization  
3       for kids that is positive, then we've come a  
4       long way. And to make that positive, we've got  
5       to teach them to work together in a

6       constructive way for other goals, other than  
7       just the feeling of belonging to the only  
8       organization that's around.

9                       Yes?

10                    PARTICIPANT: I was just wondering  
11       how we stop the loss that is already working in  
12       the system. All the money is just going away.  
13       Any federal funds that are available, it seems  
14       that there are all kinds of strings, whereas  
15       non-profit organizations who aren't tied to the  
16       state cannot reach this money. I just wanted  
17       to know what you thought about that.

18                    ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Well, I think  
19       it depends on the state, and I think that's one  
20       of the frustrations with block grants. For  
21       example, with the COPS program, I can shape  
22       that and work with police agencies and make

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1       sure that money gets out the right way because  
2       I'm responsible for getting it out to the



3       agency that's going to use it. And we have  
4       some discretionary monies.

5               Other states have marvelous plans and  
6       I think distribute their money in a fairly  
7       decent way. If you can afterwards give me the  
8       name of the state, I'll try to follow up with  
9       you, and give you some suggestions.

10              PARTICIPANT: In answer to your  
11       question, I think it would be beneficial if  
12       there were legislation coming out of the  
13       Justice Department that said to local  
14       governments and the state government, "We're  
15       not going to give you any more money. The  
16       juvenile detention system leads to jail or to  
17       prisons." Until you show that you have tried  
18       this resolution and the option of --

19                               (Applause)

20              PARTICIPANT: The point is that jails  
21       and prisons are being filled not because we  
22       need to put away a good kid who might do a bad

1       act, but because it's big business. And we  
2       need to face that reality. We need to  
3       challenge it even if it's unpopular.

4                   And we need to say to localities, "If  
5       you tell us that you've tried all things, and  
6       you still need jails and prisons, we'll help  
7       you. But we would rather give you money for  
8       alternative programs and correctional options  
9       for treating violence and abuse."

10                  It is a community problem. And the  
11       problem is, if we build more jails and more  
12       prisons, the same localities will fill them.  
13       And we can't afford to be locking our youth  
14       anymore.

15                               (Applause)

16                  ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: The Congress  
17       has foreseen that because there is a prison  
18       grant program that does not provide for such  
19       strings. And what we're trying to do is,  
20       through our community policing initiative and

21 through what monies we can get into prevention,  
22 try to do everything we can at the earliest

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1 stage as possible to teach these issues.

2 PARTICIPANT: The Juvenile Justice  
3 and Delinquency Prevention Act is up for  
4 reauthorization this year. It provided some  
5 important federal standards in terms of the  
6 institutionalizing of the status offenders,  
7 from moving children from jail and keeping them  
8 separate from adult prisoners.

9 What is the administration and  
10 Justice Department doing, and how can we all  
11 help so that we retain the emphasis on  
12 prevention and on some the issues that this  
13 woman raised, rather than focusing on youth  
14 predators, and rather than moving toward a  
15 system that does not adequately deal with the  
16 issues you raised earlier?

17 ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I think we

18        have all got to work together in these days  
19        because Senator Thompson and Senator Biden are  
20        working on this area.

21                    Our position is that we have reached  
22        out to advocates, we've reached out to

39  
1        community groups to hear how the Act might be  
2        finetuned and improved, and we have made  
3        recommendations. And we will continue to work  
4        with Senator Biden and Senator Thompson to  
5        ensure that the best parts of the Act are  
6        carried forward.

7                    PARTICIPANT: Nancy Palmer from  
8        Florida.

9                    A lot of the focus here appears to be  
10       on the juvenile and so forth. And I just hope  
11       as you travel, you will remind people that we  
12       find that a lot of these problems, as far as  
13       high school dropouts and so forth, relate to  
14       the decisions by adults such as the board.

15                   And it's very important that we teach  
16   children communication and conflict resolution  
17   in terms of their male/female relationships  
18   from a very young age, so that at some point,  
19   we can preserve our families.

20                   Since there are so many problems as  
21   people marry, divorce, remarry, and so forth,  
22   that the children become the people that lose

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1   in that situation. So I hope we won't focus  
2   just on the children, but on the adults that  
3   make decisions that impact their kids.

4                   ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Well, that's  
5   the reason I suggested that you look at it from  
6   a comprehensive point of view, as opposed to  
7   just a focus on the child. If violence is a  
8   learned behavior, it's going to be learned in  
9   the home, as probably the first place. And  
10   that's the reason it is so important to focus  
11   on what you might do with those violences

12       against them with monies that will be coming to  
13       the state this year.

14                       Yes, sir.

15                       PARTICIPANT: One of the problems  
16       that we're facing is that -- the enormous  
17       amount of volunteerism and a lack of true  
18       involvement in the community really makes a  
19       difference, and some of the questions designed  
20       around the lack of incentives for that.

21                       Perhaps the Attorney General might  
22       drop a word to the President that we could have

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1       a tax break for voluntary work.

2                       (Laughter)

3                       PARTICIPANT: There are certain kinds  
4       of activities of individuals that were donated,  
5       in terms of time.

6                       ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: My sense is  
7       that before the tax breaks -- because that's  
8       going to mean less money for the programs that

9       you want -- I find that there is a tremendous  
10       spirit of volunteerism, but people don't know  
11       how to do it.

12                 We're grappling with that in the  
13       Department of Justice because I've announced a  
14       pro bono policy that suggests 50 hours of pro  
15       bono services and aspirational goals.

16                 They want to do it. And I have been  
17       to orientation programs with young lawyers in  
18       the Department, who want very much to  
19       participate. But how can they? For example,  
20       in Washington, if they are not a member of the  
21       D.C. Bar, what can they do as an alternative?  
22       Where can they go? What kind of work they do?

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1       What type of conflict might they have with the  
2       Department of Justice? What type of case are  
3       they going to handle?

4                 The more we can spell that out and do  
5       it in the right way, and make it easy for them,

6       and make them feel comfortable in their  
7       volunteering, I think the more we can support  
8       that effort.

9               I will pass your suggestion along to  
10      the President, but I would like to concentrate  
11      on how we can make volunteerism easy for  
12      people.

13              In Miami, for example, we have a  
14      significant elderly population in the  
15      northeastern condominiums. They would love to  
16      volunteer, but they are hampered because of  
17      transportation difficulties. Let's think about  
18      some of those problems.

19              This question, then I'm going to have  
20      to leave.

21              PARTICIPANT: Your theory is a  
22      primary example of individual achievements.

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1      And it's needed to set examples. And I  
2      personally commend you.



3 (Applause)

4 ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: It's not me.

5 There are just some very wonderful people  
6 involved. And one of the reasons I have to  
7 leave is to get back to call them, to tell them  
8 what a wonderful job they're doing.

9 (Laughter)

10 PARTICIPANT: Although there may not  
11 be funding times, I think, as Attorney General,  
12 you could make it clear that there are not bad  
13 children out there. They are children, and the  
14 distinction between delinquency and dependency  
15 is a very dangerous and a harmful distinction  
16 we make through our entire system.

17 Children need rehabilitation support.  
18 They are dependent on us. And if they don't  
19 have a family to rely on, they need to rely on  
20 all of us. And that is a message that you as  
21 Attorney General can provide, even if we can't  
22 necessarily find funding.

1                   ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Well, that's  
2       the message that I have tried to convey since I  
3       took office when I was state attorney in Miami,  
4       and I will continue to try to convey that it  
5       begins when a parent conceives. I mean, just  
6       in terms of ensuring prenatal care, and  
7       ensuring preventative medical care, ensuring  
8       child care that's educational and thoughtful  
9       and sharing afternoon and evening programs in  
10      the most nurturing family possible. And that's  
11      the message I will continue to convey.

12                   But I want to thank you all for the  
13      wonderful work you do. And just know, you are  
14      making a difference.

15                   (Applause)

16                   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

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