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JANET RENO

6

ABA DISPUTE RESOLUTION CONFERENCE

7

HYATT REGENCY

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CRYSTAL CITY, VIRGINIA

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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

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

4

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

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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

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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,

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.

10

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 perspective, as well as from
21 the prevention perspective. Parks and
22 recreation specialists can be wonderful allies

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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

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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

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

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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

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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

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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

22
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?

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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.

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

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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

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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

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.

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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

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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

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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.

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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

36

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

38

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

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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.

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

41

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?

42

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.

43

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 afternnoon 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)

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