



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE JANET RENO
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
TO THE
NATIONAL SUMMIT ON SCHOOL-BASED OUTREACH
FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAMS

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Holiday Inn Capital
Federal Ballroom
415 New Jersey Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

P R O C E E D I N G S
(10:14 a.m.)

GENERAL RENO: I may talk about children, but this lady does something about children, and does something about children in so many different ways. I know I talk about children because I know I can get results, but she gets them for me.

Why am I standing up here talking about health insurance? Because I was the chief prosecutor in Dade County for 15 years, and looked at pre-sentence investigations to try to fathom what we could do in terms of prevention programs that could make a difference in a child's life. I would look at those pre-sentence investigations and see: head injury at age five, emotional and behavioral problems followed; high fever untreated at age seven, emotional and behavioral problems followed; deafness caused by infection untreated at three years of age.

You can go down the list. It became clear to me that we have got to begin at the beginning. If zero to three is the most critical time,

if during that period of time the child learns the concept of reward and punishment and develops a conscience, if 50 percent of all learned human response is learned in the first year of life, we've got to start at the beginning.

One of the critical blocks of this building progress is health care for children in a primary way that prevents and gets at it at the beginning. That's why I'm here. If we can get the children of America across the board preventative and primary health care that prevents the tragedy before it occurs and prevents a life in which either there is permanent damage or we're playing catch-up ball from the get-go, we can make such an incredible difference.

Something exciting has happened in this administration. I'm trying to figure out how Secretary Glickman gets in on this, but Secretary Riley, Secretary Shalala and I have engaged in one common effort, an effort that is the Health Children-Safe Schools Grants Program that is now developing one funding pool from the three Departments working together.

Six and a half years ago people told us it couldn't be done. It's been done because of the leadership of these two people, and we're expanding to other members of the Cabinet.

Secretary Glickman has told me from the beginning that the nutritional program is one of the keys to it. So this is what it's all about. We've got to start a new day in America where the doctors and the lawyers talk together, where public health specialists talk with criminal justice specialists, where educators talk with the prosecutors, so that we solve the problems together. These problems are not isolated and capable of solution in one discipline. We've all got to do it together.

To you, who care and who are on the front lines and who are making a difference, I say thank you. You are doing God's work.

I would like to introduce my leader in education, the man who has been there saying "Hello, Jan; is everything okay," given me a pat on the back and then given me a great education in what we're doing to improve the lives of children in America, the wonderful Secretary of Education, Dick Riley.

(Applause and, at 10:19 a.m., end of remarks.)