

ORIGINAL

1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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5
6 AN ADDRESS BY

7
8 THE HONORABLE GRIFFIN B. BELL
9 ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

10 BEFORE THE

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12 HOUSE OF DELEGATES

13 AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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22 MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1979

23 9:30 A.M.

24 ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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2 ATTORNEY GENERAL BELL: Thank you very much, Mr.
3 Chairman. I want to speak briefly to you this morning.
4 Thank you, on behalf of the Department of Justice, for all
5 of the help you have given to the Department, and to me
6 personally as Attorney General, over the last two years. I'd
7 hate to be Attorney General without the assistance of the
8 House of Delegates of the A.B.A., that have been -- we have
9 about a 90 percent agreement record, I think. Even if we
10 disagree about one or two, we're not disagreeable about it.

11 I particularly want to thank the American Bar for
12 the help that they gave on screening nominees for Federal
13 Judgeships, one of the biggest jobs that we have right now;
14 and it may be the most important thing that we're doing, and
15 we couldn't do it without the help of the A.B.A. Committee.

16 I think you are all interested in the fact that we
17 are trying, for the first time, what they call an affirmative
18 action program, and be interested to know that the affirmative
19 action group, based on the ratings they've received from the
20 A.B.A. Committee, are about as good as the ratings, in
21 general, the group are getting. I say that because I don't
22 think there's any reason to despair over the fact that we
23 are trying, for the first time, to make the Federal Courts
24 more representative.

25 I think we are together on all of the legislative --

1 important legislation to improve the delivery of justice.
 2 We didn't do so well in the last Congress, but I have high
 3 hopes in this Congress for the early part for Congress to act.

4
 5 We're not together on the rate of the interfacing
 6 we have at the present. If you change your mind, maybe you've
 7 seen a burning bush somewhere. I was hopeful last year we
 8 could compromise. That may not be possible this year. There
 9 seems to be quite a head of steam building up. I think you
 10 may have a much larger fight on your hands than you could
 11 have had last year. I don't know just how that will come
 12 out, but on the other so-called improvements in the delivery
 13 of justice, parts of the package, we ought to get them.

14 We had a little tiff here about a year ago over
 15 Grand Jury reforms. We have now put in most of the reforms
 16 by way of including the reforms in the U.S. Attorney's Manual.
 17 We haven't yet agreed on having a lawyer there as a witness
 18 in the Grand Jury room, but other than that, I think we have
 19 taken care of most of the reforms you wanted.

20 We are still in the process of reorganizing the
 21 LEAA. You have a big interest in LEAA, of course, so much
 22 money going into LEAA, the things that you are interested
 23 in. We have a reduced budget, from \$800 to \$500 million. In
 24 the time I've been there, we've reduced the number of employees
 25 from 900 to about 500, but we think it's still good as it

1 it was, if not better than it was before. We tried to take
2 the fat out of the organization, particularly at the levels
3 where we had so many planners. The thing is, we can still
4 get the same money out to the firing line, we think.

5 We are very hopeful that we are going to have the
6 Federal Tort Claims Act amended, to substitute the United
7 States as a party defendant for Government employees who are
8 sued, such as FBI agents, or your present Attorney General,
9 who has been sued more than 300 times --

10 (General laughter)

11 A few months ago, it was feared that we would cause
12 precedent on that, but I'm thankful that we have been able
13 to get together.

14 Now, the last thing I want to mention is, as you
15 deliberate, you will be adding on anything where you expect
16 the Federal Government to put the money up, I've been talking
17 a lot to Judge Chesback about the Center for Defense Services.
18 This is a way, I guess, in the end, of getting Federal funds.
19 I want to say to you that the Federal Government is broke.

20 (General laughter)

21 The national debt is over \$800 billion, and before
22 too long, unless we balance the budget, I imagine the debt
23 will hit a trillion. I would not want to be President when
24 the national debt hits a trillion dollars. And there's no
25 State today without a surplus, that I know of. So I want to

1 make you a proposition: Anything you get up where you need
2 money, we will run it. We are experts, in the Federal level,
3 at running things.

4 (General laughter)

5 Get your money from the States.

6 (General laughter)

7 If we can't run it, in the Justice Department, we'll
8 talk to the Post Office Department about it.

9 (General laughter and applause)
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