

**TALKING POINTS ON DOMESTIC AND YOUTH VIOLENCE**  
**ATTORNEY GENERAL'S IOWA TELECONFERENCE**  
**OCTOBER 25, 1995**  
**11:30 P.M.**  
**STARC ARMORY-DES MOINES, IOWA**

**I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

- \* It is wonderful to be back here with you in Iowa again. I had a chance to speak with Iowans through the Network when I was here last year, and I was delighted when I learned that I would be able to talk to you again through the Network about two critical issues facing Iowans and the Nation: Youth Violence and Domestic Violence.
- \* I understand that we are connected today with at least 12 different sites throughout Iowa, where there are gathered local police and sheriffs, professionals that work in the domestic violence and youth violence field everyday, victims of domestic violence, operators of shelters for battered women, Americorps volunteers and others. Here with me in Des Moines today is Bonnie Campbell, the former Attorney General of the State of Iowa and Director of the Violence Against Women Office, Don Nickerson, United States Attorney, and in Cedar Falls/Waterloo is United States Attorney Steve Rapp, with a group at Drake University is Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller, among others. Welcome to you all.
- \* I would like to share with you some of my thoughts on the issues of domestic violence and youth violence, and describe what we have been doing, in partnership with others at the local and state levels, to address these issues. Then, thanks to the marvel of modern technology, I hope to take a question from each of the sites where you have already begun discussing these issues.

**II. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**A. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH**

Domestic violence is not a private matter. It is a critical national problem that affects us all -- in every community, in every work-place and in every school.

Iowans can be proud of the role one of their fellow Iowans is playing in the effort to combat domestic violence. We created a Violence Against Women Office in the Justice Department last March, and asked former Iowa Attorney General Bonnie Campbell to head it.

Earlier this month, President Clinton named October National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a clear demonstration of the high level of commitment the President gives to this issue. The President knows from personal experience how serious a problem domestic violence is.

He followed up with a radio broadcast in which he called on American men to pledge never to hit a woman.

Greater public awareness that domestic violence is a crime, and not simply a private family matter, is essential for combatting the problem.

At Bonnie's suggestion, the President called on all agencies of the government to begin employee awareness campaigns modeled after those currently under way in private industry and at the Justice Department.

#### **B. THE PROBLEM -- BJS STATISTICS FOR 1992 AND 1993**

Women were attacked about six times more often by offenders with whom they had an intimate relationship than were male violence victims.

Nearly 30 percent of all female homicide victims were known to have been killed by their husbands, former husbands or boyfriends.

In contrast, just over 3 percent of male homicide victims were known to have been killed by their wives, former wives or girlfriends.

The rate of intimate-offender attacks on women separated from their husbands was about three times higher than that of divorced women and about 25 times higher than that of married women.

#### **C. THE PROBLEM IN IOWA**

The Iowa Department of Justice reports that in fiscal year 1994 (which ended in June of 1995) more than 30,000 domestic abuse victims were served by the state.

More than 10,000 adults and children were provided with care at shelters, with an average stay of 9 days.

Since 1990, 49 Iowa women have been murdered in domestic abuse incidents, 23 of them by their husband or ex-husband.

The problem exists in every part of our population -- regardless of age, income, race, religion, social status, or sexual orientation.

#### **D. THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT**

There is a real need for a comprehensive, multi-disciplined approach to domestic violence. Police, prosecutors, health professionals, and victim advocates need to provide a seamless system of response for victims and their families.

That is why President Clinton and the Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act last year, landmark legislation that combines tough new penalties with programs to prosecute offenders and help women victims of violence.

#### **E. WORKING WITH THE STATES**

Every state has received its share of \$26 million in grants to help train police, hire more prosecutors and improve victims services.

We have encouraged the states and local law enforcement agencies to begin programs that will enhance their ability to prevent domestic violence, to punish it and to end it.

And every state has set up working groups to coordinate multi-disciplinary cooperation.

We've also designed a new \$20 million effort to use community policing as a resource in the effort to combat domestic violence. The COPS Office is currently accepting applications from police departments around the country to fund innovative community policing strategies aimed at domestic violence.

#### **F. ADVISORY COUNCIL**

In July, HHS Secretary Shalalá and I convened the first meeting of the Advisory Council on Violence Against Women, a group of experts and practitioners who are helping to implement the Violence Against Women Act.

New criminal penalties are already working. Earlier this fall a West Virginia man was sentenced to life imprisonment for brutally beating his wife and then transporting her across state lines.

#### **G. THE FUNDING DEBATE**

The President has asked for \$170 million to states and localities combat domestic violence. The Senate agrees with the President, but the House wants to spend \$50 million less. Domestic crimes are significantly different than crimes committed by strangers, and our police and prosecutors need training if their efforts against

domestic violence is to be effective.

There is still time for the House to fulfil the promises made when they passed the Violence Against Women Act, but time is running out.

#### **H. A NATIONAL HOTLINE**

The National Domestic Violence Hotline will soon be connected, giving victims and potential victims across America a place to turn for help. One million dollars has been awarded to the Texas Council on Family Violence to set up this national, toll-free hotline for battered women.

#### **I. THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE**

It will require a real commitment on the part of every citizen to end the cycle of violence that begins in our homes and spreads throughout our communities and into our work-places.

When children watch their parents engage in a violent fight, they learn that violence is a way of life. They learn that violence is a way to solve their problems and, in many cases, they turn to violence themselves.

#### **III. FIGHTING YOUTH VIOLENCE**

- Justice Department statistics indicate that if current trends continue, we can expect far higher rates of juvenile crime in the years ahead. Those young people often experience crime for the first time in a place that is supposed to be safe and secure, under the roof of their own home

**[DISPLAY CHART SHOWING YOUTH VIOLENCE TREND INCREASING  
AND SHOWING NUMBERS OF YOUTHS INCREASING]**

- In the last year, the rates of violence in this country have fallen but juvenile arrests for violent crime is on the increase and has reached the highest levels in two decades.
- This is perhaps the most vivid picture of the state of juvenile crime today. What this graph shows is that, while the rate of juvenile homicides remained constant between 1973 and 1988, between 1988 and 1992, the juvenile homicide rate has increased by more than 50%. (Point to red line).
- What this chart shows also shows, and what is even more terrifying, is the fact that the children of baby boomers are growing up and entering their high crime years. The upward bulge in the blue line is the population of juveniles ages 14 to 17. As

you see, the population of juveniles is going to substantially increase during the next twenty years.

- What does this suggest about the future? Even if arrest rates remain constant, the number of violent juvenile arrests will likely increase by about one-fifth, based merely on the expected increase in the youth population through 2010. However, if the rates continue to grow as they have over the past decade, we will be faced with an unprecedented number of violent juvenile crime arrests—nearly doubling the number of violent juvenile arrests experienced in 1993.
- Unless we can change the recent trends in juvenile violence, and start giving young people something to live for, this country will experience an unprecedented growth in juvenile crime over the next decade.

#### **IV. WHAT CAN BE DONE**

- As a prosecutor in Miami, I learned there is so much we can do to fight crime by keeping young people on the right path. We'll never know how many crimes we stop, but we will be safer and better for it.

Prevention starts with letting young people know that they are accountable for their actions, that society draws clear lines of conduct for them, and that the criminal justice system will be there if they step over those lines.

- I remember an eighty-four year old man in Florida who volunteered three hours out of his day, three times a week to be a teachers' aide. He gives young people high standards to live up to and shows them that he cares -- and he makes a difference in young people's lives.
- I learned that fighting crime means breaking the terrible cycle of domestic violence. I learned that 40% of the homicides in Dade County in the past 25 years were related to domestic violence. I believe that when a child sees one parent beating another, time and time again, that child is more likely to lead a life of violence himself.
- Prevention also means fighting the factors that contribute to crime -- like drugs. For too long our judicial system has been a revolving door, spinning out offenders without ever breaking the addiction that may have led them to crime in the first place.
- In Miami, we started a drug court program -- and I am proud that the Crime Act makes a major commitment to create drug courts across the country. We want to target first time, non-violent offenders and drug users, and give them an option to jail. We are telling them that we will provide them with a second chance -- we'll give you treatment and supervision, we'll help you with job training and placement - - but this is a one-shot deal with no opportunity for mistakes.

- Prevention also means stopping crime before it happens. What better way to accomplish this than to provide the necessary resources so that we have police on the streets, working with citizens to identify problems, talking kids straight before they get into trouble, building trust within a community. The police officers I knew in Miami were dedicated to just that — and that is why I was such an enthusiastic supporter of the President's initiative to put 100,000 cops on the streets of America. With 25,000 grants already awarded, we are well on our way, and we will see a difference. Now is not the time to go back on this solemn pledge to the American people.

We need far more cooperation and communication than currently exists.

All of you have an important role to play in this effort. By working together, exchanging ideas, and coordinating our work in this area, we can begin to end the terrible cycle of violence that destroys too many lives, in Iowa and around the country. I want to thank you for your efforts and assure you that the Justice Department will continue to work with you as we meet these challenges in the days and years ahead.

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