



**CORPORATE-COMMUNITY COALITIONS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY:
THE ROLE OF BUSINESS IN BUILDING SAFE AND HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES**

FELS CENTER OF GOVERNMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA

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JANET RENO

10:10 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

REPORTED BY: PAULA DUNN FILLMYER, COURT REPORTER and NOTARY
PUBLIC

JANET RENO: Thank you, Dr. Rodin and thank you for your leadership of this great University and what you're doing between the public and private to connect Philadelphia together, Michael Stiles and Lynne Abraham and all of you who have made such a difference in the six and-a-half years that I have been Attorney General.

My thanks and I salute you.

Philadelphia is a wonderful City.

I remember when I first came here as a sixth grader on my way to Princeton, New Jersey to visit an aunt.

I was so impressed with the old, the little restaurants, the new, and you have continued to create a City that represents all.

It has had its ups and its downs, but it is wonderful to come to Philadelphia and feel the absolute loyalty that the citizens of Philadelphia have for this City.

You are committed to this City and you are taking action on the streets and in your neighborhoods.

And Sister Carol, it is wonderful to see you.

I have a sense that I belong, in a little way, to this community because of the way you and others have made me feel so welcomed.

Partnerships consume business and schools, neighborhood associations for City Hall and the Philadelphia corporate leadership has been a catalyst for a community transformation.

You and other communities are proving that business, law enforcement, community leaders, educators and citizens who care are getting together.

You can reduce crime.

You can make your community a better place to live and you can look for a better future.

I am encouraged to build upon these successes and do what I can to bring the spirit of Philadelphia to every community in this nation.

At the Federal level we have resolved to form of partnership with the community.

You understand your needs and resources better than we do.

For Washington to come to Philadelphia and say you should do this or you should do that, doesn't make any sense.

For me to come and say how can we be a better partner in developing prevention, enforcement and reentry programs to make a difference is the way it should be and that's the way we want it.

We have funded and encouraged new community strategies, community policing, crime prevention programs and community cores.

I have encouraged both prosecutors and investigators to work closely with their local counterparts and to reach out across disciplines to work with educators, the faith community and other leaders.

The Administration and Congress together have taken steps to reduce violent crime. They've passed the Brady Act, we have Assault Weapons Ban.

We have mounted an unprecedented effort to get illegal guns off the streets.

We've expanded the nation's Drug Court Programs and have supported states in the fight against domestic violence.

But the key to it all is not Washington. It's not just one person or one initiative.

The key to it is the people of the community. The power of the people can make a difference.

When they are organized and together, it's incredible.

As a result of these combined efforts, at the Federal, state and local levels, violent crime has dropped seven years in a row to its lowest level in three decades.

Murders have fallen by more than 20 percent in larger cities and suburban communities and the juvenile crime rate is down for the fourth year in a row.

But do you know what America tends to do?

When the news is good, it tends to get complacent and turn to other things and forget about crime. We can't let that happen.

We must keep at it.

We can't become complacent for there is still too much violence in this land.

Let me illustrate a comparison.

In the five years from 1992 thru 1996 the City of Chicago recorded 3,063 gun homicides.

By contrast, the City of Toronto, Canada, a city of comparable size and demographics just over the border, had exactly 100 gun homicides in the same period.

Violence does not have to be the way it is in this country.

And if we build on our success, if we take the examples that I have heard about in Philadelphia this morning and that I have seen with my own eyes in these last six years, we can truly make a difference.

We can end the culture of violence in this country.

Americans can be secure in their homes, on their streets, in their schools and in their work places.

We can submit the gains that we have made.

Together we can press forward and have a lasting impact on the culture of violence in this country.

I come before you today with a challenge. Don't be complacent. Harness the power, the ingenuity and the resources of the business community, educators, this great institution where we are today, to press our advantage in

the fight against crime, the use of prosperity of today to build a better future for tomorrow and to raise new generations of America prepared to work in and live in the 21st Century.

We have a golden opportunity.

By virtually any measure, Americans are experiencing unprecedented prosperity.

Now is the time to act.

The first thing we can and must do is to ensure that all our young people, not just some but all our young people, have an opportunity for a strong and positive future where they can be their best.

If we do this we can reap results in two ways.

First, our communities will be safer; secondly, we will be developing a work force with the skills that can fill jobs that can maintain companies and businesses as first rate economic forces.

Think about it for a moment.

I had an experience that perhaps can illustrate what I'm trying to say.

In 1985 when we had to try to figure out what to do about the crack babies as the crack epidemic hit with little warning, the doctors and the child development experts took me to the public hospital and taught me that the first three years of life are the most important.

That's where the concept of reward and punishment and a conscience is developed.

That's where 50 percent of our learned human responses learned.

And I suddenly thought, what good are all the prisons going

to be 20 years from now if somebody doesn't understand what punishment means.

What good are the great educational institutions going to be for that child if he does not have a foundation of learning in those first critical years.

As we look at how we work together, let us look at how we provide a comprehensive system that gives our children the foundation of living upon which we can build opportunity, upon which we can build skills and upon which we can rest safely.

In the midst of our nation's prosperity, we can have both a responsibility and an opportunity to make sure that the economic expansion extends to the most economically disadvantaged and vulnerable of our citizens and that no one is left behind.

Now you may say, but how do we afford it?

I've heard enough stories this morning at the Chamber of Commerce, it has been so wonderful to give me an opportunity to hear what was going on and to suggest things that are happening, I have heard from businessmen who are saying, you know, we started this program and we're seeing a return on our investment.

We're seeing a safer community, a better work force, we're seeing crime go down.

Ladies and gentlemen, if we look at the strength of America, it lies not in its smokestacks, not in its factories, not in its buildings, not in its computers.

The strength of America lies in its people and we have got to reinvest in community and people, and the return of to business in the long run will be many times over.

The skilled and unskilled, the unskilled and the unemployed are responsible for a significant portion of the crime in this country.

Over 40 percent of the nation's prison population never completed high school. About 36 percent of our jail population was unemployed prior to their most recent arrest and nearly half of this group had a monthly income of less than \$600.

Given the right opportunities, however, the economically disadvantaged could become part of the work force that fills the jobs and maintains this nation as the strongest country in the world.

Just as we have seen many economically disadvantaged individuals go from welfare to work, so too can we see progress with the unemployed, but we have an another problem.

In these next years, because of the success of enforcement efforts, we will see 400 to 500,000 people come back from Federal, state and local prisons to the communities across America.

We can let them come back without education.

We can let them come back without skills that will enable them to earn a living wage.

We can let them come back to the apartment over the open air drug market where they got into trouble in the first place, and guess what, you're going to have a bigger crime problem in Philadelphia.

Or we can develop reentry programs where business, law enforcement and others work together to make sure that while in prison, we utilize that time to ensure education and the development of skills and the development of life skills so that they can be productive people when they return to the community.

Crime prevention and public safety cannot be viewed as a job for the police and prosecutors alone.

International Association of Chiefs of Police, I think Commissioner Timoney would tell you, we can't do it by ourselves.

If we learn one thing, it's that collaboration makes the difference.

There is an important role for business to play.

Many of you are already involved in crime prevention activities in Philadelphia and I salute you again and again and again.

If you're not, I encourage you to start today.

Every community in America is different and every community is unique.

We would not pretend to know what is best for Philadelphia.

But let me point you in the right direction.

This morning I met a gentleman who has been engaged in mentoring and in promoting mentoring throughout the United States and here in Philadelphia.

If you just want to start, get your company to become mentors to youth at risk or to a six year-old before they get into trouble.

That mentor can make a difference.

Properly trained, with a little effort, that person can help a young person become constructive and positive and have a future.

But one of the earliest partnerships has its roots right here in Philadelphia.

In 1968, the Tasty Baking Company started the Allegheny West Project and later formed a community development

corporation, the Allegheny West Foundation, to help combat arising crime, vandalism and youth gang activity in the neighborhoods surrounding this wholesale bakery.

Even then in 1968 the company's officers recognized that neighborhood residents were an important constituency for their business and then that the best way to ensure the business's stability was to become actively involved with residents in positive ways.

Since then, the company has worked closely with neighborhood residents, schools and law enforcement.

It has helped rehabilitate over 300 derelict buildings into single family homes, converted abandoned warehouses into apartment buildings and community centers, revitalized the neighborhood's commercial district, created a police substation and a municipal service center and placed over 500 local high school students in career-related summer jobs.

That company has made a difference.

Its efforts have had a ripple effect which has not only transformed this North Philadelphia neighborhood, but also inspired a dramatic city-wide public/private partnership to Philadelphia planners.

As many of you know, the Philadelphia plan provides state tax credits for businesses that form long-term partnerships with community development corporations to improve conditions and opportunities within low income neighborhoods by supporting, for example, education, child training and placement, health services, housing, community facilities or crime prevention programs.

Under the plan, each participating business pledges to provide up to \$250,000 in financial support to its community development corporation per year for at least ten years.

In addition, the business provides management advice,

financial and accounting services, insurance coverage and other income services to the CDC.

There are now 12 such partnerships in Philadelphia and they are working wonders in neighborhoods all around the City; for example, since 1994 the PNC Bank is working in the Norris Square neighborhood with activists such as Sister Carol to clean up crack houses and turn them into clean safe rental units for families.

Thepartnership has formed a family center to provide after school programs for over 50 local children as well as GED, parenting and job development classes for their parents.

They have located a neighborhood safe haven next door that provides a positive place for children to go in their free time and they have spearheaded block-by-block organizing efforts, which have helped neighborhood residents become self-reliant and in return have helped stabilize the neighborhood and help provide healthy activities.

I've seen the difference that can be made.

In Brooklyn, New York where a company worked with local law enforcement and others to renovate a 150 year-old building for a K thru 8 public school, to install a video monitoring program to the local subway system, to shut down open air drug markets and to build a park and a playground and encouraged other businesses to move into the area.

Crime went down dramatically.

You've heard from Pat Hoven about Minnesota HEALS. Pat's seen it. It's working.

When I went out there first in 1993, the circumstances and the area were very difficult.

As I have come back, I have seen the change.

It is a reality, but there is much to do.

What can you do? Reach out and find out what's happening in the community.

Identify the schools, the after school programs, the neighborhood associations, school groups, law

enforcement and committed individuals and see what is needed in the community to form the building blocks of a strong and healthy community around our children.

As business leaders, you have an advantage. The plain and simple truth is somebody said, I was an educator once and it was very difficult to get community leaders on the phone if you were an educator, but if the president of the local company was out there, he can say, I can get something done, we can make a difference.

Use the clout.

Use the authority that you have established as a business leader in this community to make an investment in the most precious capital we have; the people of America.

I do not need to tell corporate executives or law enforcement officials that information is key to decision making and planning, just as it is critical to know your customers when you're developing or marketing a product.

Learn in a careful methodical way what the crime problem is around your business or in the neighborhood you're focused on and you can make a difference.

Bring the businesslike analysis to the problems in your community and use the skills of business to develop a public safety strategy around your interests, around your business.

Crime is not just about guns and drugs.

Part of building a safe community is building a better quality of life.

That abandoned car, that crack house, that graffiti, that overgrown vacant lot are festering sores that contribute to the crime problem.

Businesses can rebuild community centers, renovate housing and repair parks.

In doing so, you are making a difference in that community.

Training the unskilled and displaced workers now and build a trained work force for tomorrow.

I talk to young people who have been in trouble or who are in trouble now.

I ask them, what could of made a difference in their lives.

First of all, they tell me a mentor; somebody to talk to, somebody who understands how difficult it is to grow up in America today, and then somebody who can be with them, tell them when they've done wrong.

Hold them accountable, but at the same time help them develop skills that can give them hope for the future.

Improve the basic skills for workers so that they will be ready to tackle the challenges and demands and then grab hold of the problem.

What are we going to do with those prisoners who return to our communities?

Are we going to put our head in the sand or are we going to come to grips with the issue and say, how do we convert these ex-offenders from an ex-offender to a positive contributing member of the community.

I have a suggestion. Consider a reentry court, which supervises the return of an offender from prison.

Establish early on many months before the offender returns, a community group, a church, not for profit, a weed and

seed, that would be the sponsor for that person in the community.

Find a business that will sponsor them in helping them develop job skills and prepare them for work opportunities in the community, but make sure they come back with the chance of success.

If you operate out of the good old fashioned carrot and stick approach, you can truly make a difference.

If you say comply with these conditions and we'll give you opportunity, but if you come back in and test positive for drugs, you're going back to prison.

We can balance and have accountability and opportunity and public safety and well trained people for the work force.

These are the best of times, but these are also times that in Adlai Stevenson's words, "stagger the imagination and convert vanity to prayer."

These are the times where America shows what it can do.

And in these six and-a-half years I've had an opportunity to be in this great city on several occasions; to visit so many other places across this nation.

This job has sometimes been difficult, but this job has been one of the most rewarding things that ever could happen to anybody because it has given me an opportunity to see Americans who care at their best and to see the difference that one person, one business, one community, can make in the lives of its citizens.

Never, ever, in all of my life have I ever been so proud of this country and its people and after just a brief morning in Philadelphia, again, it just echoes again and again and again.

You do such a wonderful job, but we've got to try harder.

We've got to make sure that every child has an opportunity and that we build on our record of success.

I look forward to working with you in every way that I can and I thank you for this opportunity and for having me here this morning.

Children, through the CHIP Program have an opportunity for health insurance.

It's there; you just have to get them registered.

And what if you took the whole City of Philadelphia and make sure that every child was registered for health care under the Children's Health Care Insurance Program.

It makes such a difference.

That's one step.

Doctors, you can organize in this transition to try to build one community on another.

Link Sister Carol with the nearby communities so that you build one together and there's a plan for all of Philadelphia and no place will be left out.

Get somebody to go through the libraries.

But figure out how we can give children who should have the opportunity an opportunity to understand the incredible technology that's informational and figure out how libraries and otherwise will help every child be computer literate before they have to have remedial programs down the road.

Dr. Rodin and I have talked about what we could do about the medical community, that's a business, if you will, and law community.

How we can provide access to them all.

There are too many people who can't afford to go for law.

How the legal profession can reach out and make a difference.

Talk to the pediatricians, the family physicians, the psychologists and the psychiatrists of Philadelphia, you can link together and I would think there are a number of physicians who are willing to provide services if they can figure out how to get the patient from across town to them, figure out transportation connections.

Just in your outlet it can be done if everybody in Philadelphia agreed to be a mentor; agreed to be trained to be a mentor to understand how to talk to the children, how to listen to children, how to back them up when they need your guidance and a piece of your mind when they needed that.

The figures show that mentors on a consistent basis doesn't take that much time and can make a difference in children.

There is just so much, if you just listen today, for the incredible opportunity we have to reach out and make a difference. I keep thinking of the City of Brotherly Love and I think you all deserve it.

Mr. Pizzi, of the Chamber of Commerce, this morning said that he would explore the possibility of doing a small template on what investments have been made and what the return has been, because the Chief and others talked about how we measure.

If the academic institutions came together and we really understood it, more and more came together, we would have a better understanding of what's happening.

Law enforcement agencies at the Federal level are finally developing the ability to collect data and put it into a data base to analyze it to see what it means.

But just think of what we could do if we give to

Commissioner Timoney the research and development capacity to figure out what's working and what's not working to show the return on the investment so that you could convince corporate executives that there is worthwhile reasons; there are worthwhile reasons for making these investments.

How do you strategically approach in an area of crime around Sister Carol's Norris Square?

How can the businesses help get these resources to meet the needs?

There is so much that could be been done.

To answer your earlier question, I think the information and the research makes people understand that crime fighting is not a Republican or Democratic or Bipartisan matter.

It is a matter that requires common sense, supplied information, strategic use of this information to improve the community in the best way possible and I think you are on your way in Philadelphia, but I think that the academics could be a tremendous influence this year.

Let me caution you about one thing, there is a tendency to evaluate something in a vacuum and here may be a wonderful program for six to nine year-olds, but if there's no program for nine to 12 year-olds, then the six to nine year-olds program will be a failure because part of it is developing programs with the community programs.

With respect to evaluations, they can be so effective because we started a drug court in Miami in 1988, evaluators came in on their own to check it and see.

The indications were that it was working and it has now spread across the country, but you have to constantly monitor that to make sure that the resources are sufficient.

On the educational side, we did have to look at a comprehensive program and that has produced some really

remarkable things in that regard figuring an early investment of zero to three will save remedial monies down the road that can be put into higher teacher salary to attract better teachers or to attract teachers into the educational system and how using the business community to look at it from a business point of view and how you involve the skills necessary to help the child and then you evaluate it too.

It is a wonderful, wonderful area of just potential that is incredible and we just got to figure out what works.

But one of the problems is, that we don't know what works for probably 18 years for that child just coming into the world now and as you point out from the mentoring study, if you don't provide continuity, if you don't stick with it and you don't keep at it and it's just not comprehensive, you're going to be doomed to failure.