

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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Opening Remarks:

THE 1993 NATIONAL SUMMIT ON U.S. DRUG POLICY

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ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO

Friday May 7, 1993  
9:20 a.m.

Auditorium  
Thurgood Marshall Building  
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ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Thank you very much, Congressman. It's a great honor to be here; to be here with Dr. Brown and with you who have, I think, done so much in the area both of criminal justice and in dealing with the problems associated with drug abuse in America. I really look forward to working with Dr. Brown in every way I possibly can. I want to do what I can to support his efforts. I've told him if he sees me do something wrong to call me and say, stop it now.

These are the issues that I think need to be addressed if we are to have a real impact, long term, on drug abuse in America. I think we should all commit ourselves to a thoughtful, non-political, low-key approach for what we can do about drugs. I think we should discuss it as we discuss other matters of Government policy, without a lot of rhetoric, with a lot of evaluation, with as hard data as we can develop, and with as much survey of what's going on in America as possible. I would think you could find some clear answers.

First, in terms of interdiction, we've got to ask questions. I don't have all the answers, but I'm going to be asking questions. Based on a grand jury report that was done

by the Dade County grand jury in 1983 that heard from Federal official, Federal officials pointed out that prior to the then-Vice President's Task Force coming into Dade County, 15 percent of the drugs coming into the Southeastern United States were being interdicted. After the Vice President's Task Force arrived, maybe a little over 25 percent was being interdicted.

But Federal officials, speaking through the confidentiality of the grand jury report, reported in their final report that became public, pointed out that to have any impact on drugs in America, you would have to interdict 75 percent of the stuff, and that would be economically prohibitive.

I have always been struck by those conclusions. I have asked Federal official after Federal official, and no one has ever denied that conclusion. I never thought that I would be in a position to really ask the question, and now I think it's time that we start and come up with hard data that deals with this issue of whether or not interdiction is efficient and effective.

Secondly, I think we have got to look at the policies of the criminal justice system, and rather than

reach out and tell other people what to do, I think the Department of Justice has to first start asking itself questions.

I think our first issue should be what cases do we charge. There has been an emphasis, both from the bill and otherwise, to federalize a lot of what we do. I think it's imperative that we draw back and ask what should be Federal, what should be a State prosecution.

This answer should be derived from a thoughtful, reasonable application of the principles of Federalism, mixed with the realities of local conditions, so that we develop guidelines as to what would be a Federal prosecution and what would be a State prosecution. But as a State prosecutor, I have seen enough dumping from Washington to last me for a long time. And I never want to be accused of being an Attorney General who dumped on the States and the localities, or I could never go home again.

I want to work with the National Association of Attorneys General and the National District Attorneys Association to make sure that we understand what is the right way to do it, and that it's not the Federal Government forcing its opinions on the States, but all of us working

together to come up with a common consensus of what should be charged federally and what should be charged statewide.

I think in that process it's clear to me that the States and particularly local governments are better able to handle those prosecutions involving people with drug abuse problems, because I think those issue can be far better treated in local programs through local procedures that reintegrate the person into the community as soon as possible.

In other instances, I see cases being tried in Federal court because States don't have enough prison cells to house confirmed career criminals for the length of time they're sentenced to. It may be better to prosecute the case in State court, but develop a pool of prison cells throughout America that all States and the Federal Government can draw on to make sure that we house the dangerous career criminals for the length of time of sentencing and that we do not have a situation, such as we have now, where there are relatively low-level offenders, non-violent offenders, serving 10- and 15-year minimum mandatories in Federal prisons while in State court and in State prisons people are getting out 20 to 30 percent of the sentence after they've been convicted of armed robbery or other serious violent crimes.

In short, it's using our limited resources as wisely as possible.

We have then got to look at minimum mandatories and understand who is serving them. I've already met twice now with Dr. Kathleen Hawk of the Bureau of Prisons to understand just who is in the prisons, what crime they've committed, and how long they should be there, because I am receiving information from around the country, from the United States attorneys around the country, saying that their hands are tied by the approach of the minimum mandatory sentence and that that money is being wasted because that person or people could be reintegrated into the community without further concern about crime.

These are the questions that we are looking at. I don't want to come to conclusions. I want to make the most informed decision I can of how we best can use limited prison cells in the most efficient manner possible.

The second point is I think it's important for Attorneys General around this nation, I think it's important for Congress and State legislators to understand that unless we have truth in sentencing, we're going to continue to undermine the credibility of our criminal justice system at

every level.

When you raise children, you learn that you've got to sometimes punish. The punishment should be fair and objective; that if it is threatened, it should be carried out. And the punishment that is threatened but not carried out probably has a more disastrous effect than no punishment at all.

To see minimum mandatory sentences passed, to see sentences enhanced through sentencing guidelines approaches, both at the State level and at the Federal level, with no regard to whether we have the prison cells to match those sentences, and with no regard as to whether we have the operating expenses to operate the prison cells even if we had them, is going to lead us to a situation of gridlock, which I have experience in Florida, and it's going to lead again to a lack of credibility in the system and a faith that means what it says.

Then we've got to step back and look at alternatives. Twenty-six percent of the people in Federal prison today are aliens. Should we be housing them? Should we return them to their country of origin, with the assurance that if they return to this country, they're facing a very

stiff sentence?

When I look at the burdens that have been placed on the American people, I think that one of the hard questions we ask is: What do we do about those aliens? Can we do something that can have a deterrent effect so that they don't come back, but at the same time alleviate the burden that the American people are experiencing by having them here? Those are the hard questions.

I think we've got to look at others and see both those who are there now on minimum mandatories and those that we might send to prison on minimum mandatories to develop alternative sanctions -- alternative sanctions that operate like a carrot and stick approach, not one that says, okay, you don't have to serve time, go into the community and be good and go to this program, but a program that says, Look, you need job training and placement, because if you come back out into the community, you're not going to have the resources or the ability to cope. You need some other counseling. If you participate with us and get into these counseling programs, we are going to return you to the community. You are going to be under the regional court sentence. Your sentence is going to continue to be monitored. There will be



case manager following your progress in the community. If you mess up, you're going to be right back in jail pretty quick. But that case manager will continue to monitor you in the jail so that if you develop a better regard for what you should be doing, we'll try you again.

We can save so much money approaching it that way rather than keeping people in prison where they have not had an opportunity to reintegrate themselves into the community. But we won't do it unless we have developed the concept of case management, unless we keep that stick there in terms of the carrot and stick approach that lets people know that we really mean what we say when we say we're going to give you an opportunity and if you blow it you're going to be back in.

The concept of the court supervision and the case management is absolutely essential for these efforts to get these people back into the community.

Now, Congressman, what some of the people on the Hill will say is, Well, what's Janet talking about now? She just wants to let all these bad guys out.

In a non-partisan, non-political, non-rhetorical discussion of the problems we face, we have got to let Congressmen and State legislators know that these people,

many of them, are coming back to the community sooner rather than later; and if we reintegrate them into the community in an orderly way, we're going to have a far better chance of achieving our ultimate goal, which is the prevention of further crime. And it's got to be discussed in those terms if we are to make this common-sense approach to the problem of crime work.

But then we've got to look at other programs. We've got to look at what is happening throughout the States and the local governments of this land. The Federal Government has got to figure out a way to get moneys to the States and local governments in a wise and reasoned way. Nothing frustrates me as much than to hear a Federal grant announced -- I look at the Federal grant requirements. It takes a genius to comply in the first place. It takes a creative writer to prepare the grant application. And even then, the Federal moneys are a round peg in a square hole and it doesn't mesh, but the Federal Government says you've got to put that round peg in there because our grant doesn't envision a square hole.

We've got to let communities use their creativity, their analysis of needs and resources within their community

to come up with proposals that the Government can approve; and instead of saying you've got to do it our way because Washington knows better, we've got to develop a partnership where Federal and local authorities work together in designing programs that truly meet needs.

But I think there's got to be some Federal guidance. We've got to look at, for example, the drug court in Dade County and how we can do it better. We can't rest on our laurels. We've got to understand the theory of the carrot and stick approach, the leverage of the court, the followup, the case management that is absolutely essential.

We've got to expand our efforts because we are sometimes too often reacting in a penny-wise and pound-foolish sort of way and say, well, we've got this wonderful program to reintegrate the person into the community, but the Department of Labor couldn't come through because of budget restrictions for the job training program, and this program couldn't come through with an alternate housing site because of budget restrictions, so it failed. Then we just throw the whole program out saying it all failed.

Let's look at what's absolutely necessary in terms of getting people back into the community and reintegrated in

an orderly manner.

These programs can work, provided we give them the resources. The resources they need are far less than the resources that are necessary to maintain people in prison year after year.

But I can attest to you, the drugs and the violence, so much of what I have seen in the last 15 years on the streets of Dade County, youth gangs, teen pregnancy, dropouts, homelessness ever increasing amongst women and children, are a symptom of a deeper problem in society. And at every level of government, we're going to have to address it. That problem I think is the most critical problem that is facing America in the last 30 years, and that is that we've forgotten and neglected our children in the community interest. When 20 percent of children in America live in poverty, a far greater percentage than any other age group, and when the greater percentage of people seen at the Rape Treatment Center in Dade County are children or very young people, you understand the dimension of the problem.

We can wait for the person to come back and save some lives, but we can do so much in terms of prevention, in terms of programs in the schools, in terms of providing

treatment up front, in terms of giving children an opportunity to grow into strong, determine human beings.

One of the first suggestions that I made -- and I feel so strongly about this -- is that this nation has got to make sure that every person in America who wants drugs treatment, who's asking for it, who's on a waiting list, gets it. It makes no sense to have a nation that says to a drunk who drives down the street after five stiff drinks, plows into three people, kills all three people, breaks his two arms, is taken to the public hospital, that he's going to get his arms, even if he's innocent, set at the taxpayers' expense tonight, when we turn around and see person after person throughout this country waiting for a treatment bed because they've hit rock bottom and want treatment but they can't get it.

If you're not interested in the drug problem but only interested in the health problem, look at what drug abuse has done to the public hospitals in this nation in terms of AIDS, tuberculosis, and other inter-related health care problems.

We have got to make sure that drug treatment is addressed as part of health care reform if we are ever going

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to hope to have an impact.

But we cannot address it reasonably and in an informed sort of way unless we understand what works and what doesn't work, unless we have case managers who are not the recipients of the benefits of programs. If the person is going to be able to continue the program by saying, oh, he's not ready to be released yet and he's the one that's getting paid for it, that's not the way to do it. We have somehow or another got to set up a system of independent case managers that can say, Let's move him out; well, wait a minute, that was a little early, let's move him back in, then out again. But the managers shouldn't be the recipients of the funds.

We've got to explore in the public schools the inter-relationship between drugs and violence, expand our education programs to address both in a comprehensive sort of way, understanding that inroads that the Congress has referred to in terms of educating the middle class about drugs and also the use of educating us all and our children about conflict resolution.

But until we have a national agenda that focuses on teen pregnancy and says that we are going to have a nation where parents are old enough, wise enough, financially able

enough to take care of children, we are going to continue to be in trouble; that we're going to be a nation that provides every child, every pregnant woman prenatal care; that every child will have preventative medical care; that every child will have appropriate day care; that children will have programs for supervision after school and in the evening when both parents or that single parent is working; where we will have job training tied to school experience, not just a jobs program for the summer without any sense of what that child is going, but a job program in the summer that is linked to school experience during the school year, so that we provide a route, a highway map for that child through high school that lets that child know that if he engages in this program he will graduate with a skill that will enable him to earn a living wage.

There is so much we can do, but it becomes imperative that the Federal Government join the State legislatures and local communities in developing a comprehensive partnership that gives our children half a fighting chance. They are extraordinarily strong and they can overcome so very much if we give them half that fighting chance. They have such an ultimate sense of survival. They

have a sense of hope, a sense that there's something at the end of the tunnel, that the shift from the 8-year-old to the 11-year-old to the 14-year-old, the 18-year-old, and we see them lose that vision, and you see the light at the end of the tunnel close.

I look forward to working with Dr. Brown and Congress and most of all with people throughout this country, local officials, State officials, in a real partnership to address the problems in a non-political, thoughtful, comprehensive sort of way.

[Applause.]

MR. SCHUMER: First I'd like to welcome Reverend Jackson, who just walked in, and the Attorney General has agreed to take about 15 minutes of questions from our panelists. So I'd ask you just, because we have limited time, to make them quick questions, so that we hear as much from the Attorney General as we can.

MR. O'BOISE: General Reno, Nick O'Boise (?) from the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association.

Do you see in the future consolidation or grouping of the Federal drug effort among Federal law enforcement agencies? When you look at the Federal law enforcement effort



now against drugs, you see multiple agencies -- the FBI, DEA, Customs, ATF, and many other agencies -- that are all involved in the drug effort. Do you envision a policy in which that will be turned around or some kind of coordination will be taking place?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I'm not presumptuous as to suggest what I'm going to find, but I have already committed myself to a thorough review of the Department of Justice agencies. I think it is presumptuous of me to talk about other agencies beyond the Department of Justice. But with respect to the Department of Justice, I want to look at it and come up with a plan that, number one, eliminates any duplication. We've got too much to do to have any duplication that is costly and unnecessary.

Secondly, I want to do everything I can to make sure that the agencies' efforts are coordinated, that there is no overlap in terms of what one agency does, that all the agencies involved know what they're doing and work together in an effective way.

The one thing I cannot abide are turf battles. The one thing I cannot abide, particularly if I'm the person having authority over an agency, is one agency going in one

direction and the other going in the opposite direction and never talking.

Those are the goals I want for this year.

MR. : General, we've met before. I'm Steven Schiff, representing the 1st District of New Mexico, and I'm also a former district attorney, and I continue to be impressed by your performance in this office.

One very brief observation and one very brief question. The brief observation is I certainly agree with the overall social role you present. In my experience as a career prosecutor, I'm reluctant to tie specific social goals, or the lack of them, to the performance of time. You have a number of people in the Bureau of Prisons in custody. I believe one lady owns the Empire State Building, if I recall correctly. I think there are a number of people who committed savings and loan fraud, real estate fraud, who had a great deal of education and money and power. They were simply greedy for more. It was not a lack of anything that caused them to commit a crime. It was a moral failing. And you're welcome to respond to that, but I'd add my question.

As a state prosecutor, one of the things I saw Federal prosecutors do all the time was cases of convicted

felons in possession of a firearm. Normally, the U.S. attorneys would say, when they got such a case, We'll prosecute the individual when he or she commits a crime. Well, when they commit a crime, they prosecute them under State law at that point.

There was a brief flurry of activity at the end of the previous administration, but I wondered if you can tell me at this point if you've set a priority with U.S. attorneys on what they should do as they receive cases of convicted felons in possession of a firearm.

Now, as I say, my feeling is that law has not been enforced enough. I wonder if you have address that area of problem.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: First, with respect to your comment, I think that all people, regardless of whether they be the rich owner of the Empire State building or the 13-year-old who puts a gun up beside somebody's head as they are unloading their groceries in the driveway should know that they face punishment. And I don't think poverty or social ills in America justify anybody putting a gun upside somebody's head, nor in stealing a savings and loan blind.

One of my concerns is that we have -- the priorities

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that I have discussed, and I didn't go into them because Congressman Schumer told me to take a more local approach. But in terms of my concerns, violent crime I think has got to be the highest priority for everybody in America, the major traffickers and the distributors.

One group that I don't want neglected are what I call white-collar criminals, the people that rob a savings and loan blind, not the little person that steals a little bit here for whatever reason, but that robs us blind.

I am concerned that people will come to see that because we don't focus on financial institution fraud or financial fraud, that here is a marvelous area of organized crime to become involved in. And I want to stay absolutely attuned to that.

But I think you will find, if you walk with me -- and I know you have seen the situations -- that if you walk with me on some of the streets of Miami, as I have, there are kids that simply don't understand punishment. There are kids that are almost proud to have gone to prison. And where I think law enforcement can make a major difference is in terms of a comprehensive effort.

We started a program a year ago this April in an

area that's been plagued by crime and drugs, had a lot of problems of poverty, of single parents struggling to raise their children. We worked with the leaders in the community, and we developed a team composed of a community-friendly, highly-respected police officer; a social worker from HHS in the State; a public health nurse in the Department of Health; and a community organizer from HUD -- working with the leaders of the community, they said start in a public housing development.

They have so reduced crime through that program from April to August, they have totally disrupted the plague in the community that the police agency wanted to start replicating it in other areas. Andrew Pitt, who devastated that public housing project with the team, got into a reactive mode rather than a proactive mode.

But that's the type of program that I'm talking about, that shows what a police officer can do in that area, pull that kid back from the gang, but that the kid who deserves the punishment, instead of giving him a chance, go up to the juvenile court judge and say, Judge, I've tried to work with this kid, but he's just blown it.

What it comes back to, whether it be trying to pull

that juncture back from the throes of violence, or what Judge Goldstein does in the drug court, you've got to have, I think, judicial supervision; you've got to have a case manager, whether in this case it's the police officer or the person who does drug treatment. You've got to have programs that can get them off on the right foot. Then if you can combine that carrot and stick approach which says, Look, this is what's going to happen to you, carry it out and mean it and follow up, and you know that you're going to have some successes and failures along the way, you can make a difference.

I think everybody in this room, it's like preaching to the choir, but you've got to start preaching to the rest of America. America is sometimes simplistic in its approach, of, oh, my God, there was recidivism, we failed. But you all are talking to treatment people, and a lot of police officers who know, sometimes we start measuring success in the longer period of probation, and as we see probation expand from 1 year to 5 years to 10 years.

But there's so much that we can do if we use a common-sense approach of balancing punishment and prevention. I guess I sum it up best this way:

The successful parent is going to be one who loves their children, gives them a nurturing environment, but punishes them when they deserve it, fairly, reasonably, and consistent with the violation committed.

If you have a parent that doesn't punish or if you have a parent that threatens punishment and doesn't carry it out, or if you have a parent that is unfair or arbitrary in punishment, that child's going to have problems. If you have a parent who punishes perfectly but doesn't love and doesn't nurture, that child's going to have problems.

I think raising children is the single most difficult thing I know to do. I knew parents of 15-year-old twins eight years ago, a boy and a girl, and the girl was in love. And it's a lot more difficult than being a prosecutor or being Attorney General.

But the lessons learned from parenting probably stand us in good stead in this nation when trying to grapple with the drug problem.

MR. : Attorney General Reno, I appreciated your remarks earlier this week at the DEA anniversary ceremony.

One of the major dilemmas we face seems to me to be

the need for certainty of punishment and discouraging drug use at every level, and the incredible clogging of our courts, particularly at the State court level. Would you consider, do you think we should consider, giving police discretion for arrests of small amounts of drugs to afford the, at that point in time, arrestee, the defendant, an opportunity to take mandatory treatment subject to drug testing, rather than to go through a whole court procedure that would tie up the State's attorney, public defenders, the courts, the bailiffs and the system? If the defendants or the arrestee preferred to go to court, of course, that option would still be available.

I think you'll hear more from Mark Kleiman and his group about the value of testing. I am convinced there is tremendous value in treatment that is not presently being made available.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: We proposed in Dade County that we take our drug court and move it up just a bit to a police officer on the streets. We discussed and tried to find Federal moneys at one point to develop a diversion program associated with a police substation that would include random testing, because I think that's absolutely key



to any successful program.

Certainly programs like that can work. The one thing -- and it's going to require the discerning police officer and the threat of a legitimate stick at the end to force some of these people into treatment. The person who's not so far gone that they need to be detoxed oftentimes is not the person who's hit rock bottom to be as amenable to treatment as they might. Sometimes it takes Judge Goldstein there on your right to say, Look, there is a jail over there and you are going to that unless I see you in that program tomorrow morning.

On the other hand, there are maybe some who are so scared that they follow through. That may be the middle-class kid that Congressman Schumer was talking about who is a little bit worried about what's going to happen with his college grades or whether he's going to get kicked out.

You come back to having model programs to suit the circumstances and the environment in which you have to deal with it.

I think it's something that should clearly be explored. I think for at least some offenders it can work very well.

MS. GRIFFIN: Janice Griffin, City of Houston [inaudible] Coalition. We're familiar, of course, with the Miami Coalition. Would you say something about what are your plans for the coalition movement?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I think there's got to be a major commitment in terms of the coalition. I think that the Miami Coalition did remarkable things. For too long, they focused on prisons and police as one of their subcommittees. More and more, they came to realize that treatment and prevention was key.

To make coalitions like that work, you've got to continue to have the energy and the commitment, and if you dissipate that energy and commitment, it kind of undermines the concept of the coalition.

I think if you have community leaders that are representative of all the community, particularly where you have tri-ethnic(?) communities, I think you have got to have community representation of all the community, of all socioeconomic levels in the community, to make it work both in terms of prevention and punishment.

When you have that, it can be absolutely remarkable.

MS. STEWART: Hi, my name is Julie Stewart. I'm

the president of Families Against Mandatory Minimums, and we have thousands of people on our mailing list who are receiving 5-, 10-, and 20-year mandatory sentences as non-violent first offenders. We applaud your comments in the last week and your comments here today.

I'd just like to ask, if you do envision some changes in the mandatory sentencing laws this year, do you think that some of those might be able to offer relief for people who are already in prison?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I'm not sure that I'd put it in terms of offering relief to people who are in prison. I think I'd put it in terms of doing whatever I can to make sure that the resources of the Federal Government are used as wisely as possible to prevent those people in prison from ever committing another crime.

To give you an example of a minimum mandatory that I like, somebody who has committed three armed robberies -- I forgot to respond to your question -- and suddenly I have them on a fourth armed robbery, and the Florida prison system is not going to be able to house them for long enough and the Federal Government will house them until they're 55 or 60, I'd like to make sure they're in there for a minimum that

will assure their going to 55 or 60.

So I think we've got to carefully craft the minimum mandatory system with the resources we have to achieve the one goal: that these people should never commit another crime; and if they're so dangerous that they should be incapacitated for the rest of their crime-producing life, let's do it. If they're coming back into the communities, if they're 25 years old and a carpenter's helper, and we know that they're coming back at 35, and they're a first offender, they've never been in trouble before, it was non-violent, and we can reintegrate them into the community by working with them on job training and placement and other efforts, let's do that. Because there's going to be a better chance of them not committing further crime or their families not being a burden on society.

I forgot to answer the Congressman's question. I just reacted to the comment.

I think what that comes down to, more than anything else, is a resource problem in State and Federal prisons. And I think that's where we've got to look at it.

We prosecute felons, you know, charged with possession of a firearm in Dade County. If he hasn't hurt

somebody yet, it's difficult to get a judge to send him away unless he has an extensive prior record. We have argued, just as you have, that that's a crime waiting to happen, particularly if he has a record of violence. And that's the type of thing, Congressman, that I'd like to look at in determining what's best handled at the State court and what's best handled at the Federal court.

To give you an example, if you have a car theft ring that goes from New Jersey to the Southern District to the Eastern District and covers two States and three districts, that may be a very appropriate Federal investigation and Federal prosecution. If you have a little car jacker who, you know, takes somebody's car and leaves it five blocks away, all in central Florida, I think that's something that is better handled locally.

Those are the approaches that I'd like to take, and understand that, of course, where one group or another, I mean one government or another fails to prosecute what everybody thinks should be prosecuted, that would be another issue. But those are the types of questions I want to pose as I try to develop thoughtful guidelines, principal guidelines for what should be charged federally and what

should be charged statewide, and then guidelines for making sure that U.S. attorneys follow through on that commitment.

MR. JELAT: Attorney General Reno, I'm Paul Jelat (?) with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. I'd like to comment on your point about the square peg in the round hole on Federal financing.

We have launched a program to reduce demand for substance abuse called "Fighting Back," a \$50 million community initiative, and it's very different from anything we've done before in the following sense: We don't have a model, and, therefore, we are not proscriptive(?) in this program. We simply ask for two things: first of all, that communities involve everybody who is either affected by the problem or has a potential role to play in solving the problem; and, secondly, we ask that they address the full spectrum of demand-side issues, from prevention, early intervention, treatment, after-care, and all of that, to be part of their solution.

What they have accomplished to date is absolutely remarkable, and I think it is real evidence of what can be done if you put a round peg in a round hole. So I would like to invite both you and Dr. Brown, on behalf of Robert Wood

Johnson Foundation, to visit some of our sites and to see firsthand what can be done when you give the community the ball.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I couldn't agree with you more. I'm obviously prejudiced because I've come from a community, and I would ask you all to make sure that I don't lose touch with communities. It is very difficult to come to an office of 995,000. I didn't have public information officers. I returned all my telephone calls. I answered all my mail. I went into the community. I answered their questions. And I've discovered I can't do all that now.

But it's terribly important because I think perhaps we go in cycles in government. At times, the exciting place has been Washington. At other times, in the '70s, early '80s, the exciting place was in the State capitals.

In talking to mayors and county commissioners we visited with, seeing various communities and neighborhoods, I am convinced that the great laboratories of America right now are the communities. There are just exciting things happening.

The one thing I would urge you -- and I think the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation knows it better than I do --

is that as we focus on drug treatment, that, again, is a symptom of a deeper problem in society. And somehow or another, Washington is going to have to work with local governments to develop new, creative, and bold mechanisms that can mesh. The communities should come up with the plans; the Federal Government should say, hey, that looks great, how can we help you.

[Applause.]