

1 A VIDEO TOWN MEETING ON

2 VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

3 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room G-50

4 July 15, 1993

5 9:00 a.m. to Noon

6
7 OPENING REMARKS

8 Hal Bruno, Moderator

9 ABC News, Director of Political Coverage

10
11 AN OVERVIEW OF LAW-RELATED EDUCATION

12 Lee Arbetman

13 Program Coordinator

14 National Training and Dissemination Project

15
16 WELCOMING REMARKS

17
18 Terry Bruce

Carmen Nava

19 Vice President, Federal

Director, Public

20 Relations, Ameritech, Inc.

Affairs, Pacific Bell

21 Ben Ghess, Senior Attorney

Alan Friedman,

22 Illinois Bell

President,

23 Constitutional Rights

24 Foundation

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1 INTRODUCTION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

2 Chesterfield Smith

3 Past President, American Bar Association

4
5 REMARKS

6 Janet Reno

7 Attorney General of the United States

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. BRUNO: Good morning. I am Hal Bruno of ABC
3 News. And it's my pleasure to welcome you to a video town
4 meeting on youth, violence, and contemporary America, co-
5 sponsored by the National Law-Related Education Program
6 and the Department of Justice.

7 Our purpose today is to focus attention on the
8 dangers facing young people in our cities. Attorney
9 General Janet Reno will join me in the Dirksen Senate
10 Office Building for an open discussion with an audience of
11 teenage men and women in Washington, Chicago, and Los
12 Angeles.

13 We want to hear their concerns over the violence that
14 confronts them in their schools and communities.

15 Following the Attorney General, a panel of senators
16 and representatives will join us to hear more testimony,
17 and to consider solutions to problems raised by the
18 students.

19 But first let's turn our attention to the situation
20 faced by young people in cities across America, as
21 highlighted by these television clips from ABC news.

22 (Thereupon, a television segment was shown to the
23 audience.)

24 MR. BRUNO: My thanks to Joe Hansert for providing
25 and editing that tape for us. Now, I'd like to introduce

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1 Lee Arbetman, who is the coordinator for the National Law-
2 Related Education Program. Lee.

3 MR. ARBETMAN: Thank you, Hal. Thanks, and welcome.
4 Today's event kicks off the seventh annual law-related
5 education conference.

6 This brings together educators, attorneys, and law
7 enforcement officials with one goal in mind, and that is
8 to empower our youth, by teaching about the law, so that
9 they will lead their lives within the law.

10 This program is sponsored by the Department of
11 Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency
12 Prevention. And we'd like to recognize the Office's
13 acting administrator, John Wilson, and also our program
14 manager, Frank Gorbatage.

15 Now we'd like to go to the young people who are on
16 our panel here in the District of Columbia to introduce
17 themselves.

18 So, Amy, will you start?

19 MS. REITER: Hi. My name is Amy Reiter. I'm from
20 Montgomery County.

21 MR. HEGENS: Hi. My name is Thomas Hegens. I'm from
22 Washington, D.C.

23 MS. RIMMER: My name is Sally Rimmer, and I'm from
24 Alexandria.

25 MS. ADEBOYE: Hi. My name is Tolani Adeboye. I'm

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1 from Washington, D.C.

2 MR. HOSEIN: Hi. My name is Farouk Hosein. I'm from
3 Washington, D.C.

4 MR. ARBETMAN: Thanks very much. We will be right
5 back to you in just a few minutes. Now we'd like to also
6 thank both Ameritech and Pacific Bell for their generous
7 support that's helped make today's event a reality. Here
8 with us from Ameritech is Terry Bruce, their Vice
9 President of Federal of Relations.

10 MR. BRUCE: Thank you, Lee. Attorney General Reno,
11 members of Congress who will join us later, participants,
12 Mr. Bruno, and fellow students here and across the
13 country, Ameritech is delighted to help make possible
14 today's video conference linking students, public
15 officials, and educators in Washington, Chicago, and Los
16 Angeles.

17 Ameritech is sponsoring this demonstration of
18 distance learning in our nation's capital because we are
19 truly committed to being your link to a better life. You
20 have our wishes for a successful conference.

21 Now, let's go to Chicago, and Ben Ghess of Illinois
22 Bell, an Ameritech company. Ben.

23 MR. GHESS: Yes. Thank you, Terry. I'm Benjamin
24 Ghess. I'm an attorney with the Illinois Bell Telephone
25 Company, and I'm on the board of the Constitutional Rights

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1 Foundation here in Chicago.

2 We would like to welcome everyone in D.C. here to
3 Chicago, Attorney General Reno, members of Congress, and
4 other distinguished guests, and especially the students in
5 Los Angeles and Washington. We welcome you all here to
6 Chicago.

7 Ameritech is pleased to be a partner in this event,
8 and to be able to demonstrate its technology. The
9 students are very excited about having the opportunity to
10 talk to this distinguished panel and the Constitutional
11 Rights Foundation is proud to see the realization of its
12 dreams.

13 At this point in time I would like to start to my
14 immediate right, and let the students introduce themselves
15 to the audience. Quincy.

16 MR. FARR: Hello. My name is Quincy Farr. I'm from
17 Milwaukee.

18 MS. TRISTAN: I am Sarah Tristan. I'm from
19 Streamwood.

20 MR. LEE: My name is Allen Lee, III. I'm from
21 Chicago, Illinois.

22 MS. WASHINGTON: My name is Shannon Washington, and
23 I'm from Chicago.

24 MR. HELSINGER: My name is Alexa Helsinger, and I'm
25 from Chicago.

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1 MS. HANNA: Good Morning. My name is Racheal Hanna,
2 and I'm also from Chicago.

3 MR. BRUCE: Okay. Well, thank you. We'll send it
4 back to Washington.

5 MR. ARBETMAN: Okay. Thank you. Thanks, Ben. And
6 now we'll turn to Carmen Nava, of Pacific Bell, in Los
7 Angeles.

8 MS. NAVA: Thank you, Lee. Good morning. I'm Carmen
9 Nava, Director of External Affairs for Pacific Bell, and
10 we are so pleased to use our distance learning technology
11 to join with Ameritech and Illinois Bell to bring this
12 video conference to you. It's being brought to you via
13 Pacific Bell's Knowledge Network Project.

14 We envision a future where the telecommunications
15 network can serve to enhance the educational experience of
16 our students.

17 We're so pleased that the students here in Los
18 Angeles are participating with us from the Constitutional
19 Rights Foundation Youth Task Force Program. And I'd like
20 them to introduce themselves now.

21 MR. GARCIA: Good morning. I'm Douglas Garcia, and
22 I'm from Los Angeles.

23 MS. LUGMAN: Hello. My name is Amina Lugman, and I'm
24 from Lynwood, California.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: Hello. My name is Xristian Williams,

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1 and I'm also from Lynwood, California.

2 MS. VILLAREAL: Good morning. My name is Gabriela
3 Villareal, and I'm from Los Angeles.

4 MR. VOGEL: Hi. I'm Louie Vogel from Vallee Lindo,
5 California.

6 MS. NAVA: And back to you, Lee.

7 MR. ARBETMAN: Thank you. It's now my pleasure to
8 introduce Chesterfield Smith, the former president of the
9 American Bar Association, and a former chair of the
10 National Institute for Citizen Education in the Laws
11 national advisory board.

12 Chesterfield Smith has been a friend of Law-Related
13 Education for many years, in fact, just about as many
14 years as he's been friends with Janet Reno.

15 Chesterfield.

16 MR. SMITH: Hello. It would be inappropriate for me
17 to introduce to you someone who is perhaps the most
18 respected public official in government today, even though
19 I have done that for more than 25 years on numerous
20 occasions.

21 It's much more appropriate for me to tell this
22 audience that it's a very happy union for Janet Reno, with
23 her life-long dedication of trying to prevent crime, to be
24 united and working with the National Institute for Citizen
25 Education in the Law.

1 I think that today's program is exactly the type of
2 thing that reflects the very best of those in America who
3 want to eliminate and mitigate the causes of crime and
4 violence so that we can become again a nation whose basic
5 values have been the best the world has ever known.

6 It's my pleasure to ask Janet Reno, the Attorney
7 General of the United States, to come forward. Janet.

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. RENO: It's a great pleasure to be here today.
10 When I served as a prosecutor in Dade County, I tried to
11 visit a different school on the average of once a week,
12 because I found that students, young people, asked me
13 better questions and gave me better insights than almost
14 anybody I know.

15 As I've told reporters, they ask me better questions
16 than anybody, including newspaper reporters.

17 I worried when I came to Washington that I might be
18 too confined, that I might be confined within the Beltway
19 and within the institutions of government.

20 One of my best experiences has been to continue to go
21 to the schools, to the youth of America, to ask them
22 questions, to learn from them, to help mold policies that
23 can address what I think is the greatest single crime
24 problem in America today, and that is youth violence.

25 I have sat with a mother who has lost her child

1 through violence. I have had to deal with the 14 year old
2 who I am prosecuting, because he put a gun up beside some
3 elderly person's head and robbed them.

4 I think that the youth of America are our most
5 precious possession. They are our future. They are our
6 hopes, and our dreams, and we love them very much. They
7 can teach us so very much.

8 How we develop a process that lets people know that
9 violence in this nation will not be tolerated, that it
10 will be punished, but that it will be punished fairly in
11 ways that people can understand and accept, but more
12 importantly, there is nobody who has ever been the victim
13 of a crime that would rather have punished than prevent,
14 we have got to focus on what we can do to prevent this
15 violence that is tearing our community apart, that is
16 killing our young people, that is subjecting our young
17 people to punishment.

18 And again, I now have an opportunity to ask the young
19 people of America, from Washington, to Chicago, to Los
20 Angeles: What do you think?

21 And I'd appreciate your thoughts. I'd like to begin
22 by your telling me a little bit about what your community
23 faces, in terms of the violence that you are witnessing in
24 your schools and in your community.

25 MR. BRUNO: I think we go to Chicago first for the

1 first response. Am I correct? Why don't we start there
2 in response to the Attorney General's question?

3 Go ahead, Chicago.

4 MS. WASHINGTON: Well, first I'd like to say the way
5 violence has impacted me personally, and my friends around
6 the neighborhood, is that it limits everything you do.

7 You can't walk down the street -- or you can, but
8 you're always constantly worrying about who is behind you.
9 You're always looking at the cars that roll past.

10 I have problems sitting on my friend's porch in the
11 summertime, because I'm always worried about cars coming
12 by. It limits everything you do, in the schools --
13 everything. There's very little you can do without
14 worrying about violence.

15 MS. RENO: I couldn't agree with you more. Shortly
16 after I came to Washington, I went to an elementary school
17 where there had been a number of very tragic drive-by
18 shootings in the neighborhood.

19 I talked to one young lady who said -- she was about
20 ten -- and she said, "When will I be able to walk home
21 again and go out to play again?"

22 We need to focus on these issues, in terms of
23 rebuilding communities so that you can feel safe. And I'd
24 appreciate other thoughts and other indications of the
25 type of violence that we have to deal with.

1 You talked about this random drive-by violence that
2 can be terrifying. What are some other examples that
3 you're seeing in your communities?

4 MS. TRISTAN: In our school, there is an increasing
5 number of physical violence, but also at our school
6 there's an increasing number of rapes.

7 I think that's something that needs to be dealt with,
8 because our school just decides to hide it, and not let
9 the whole student body know about it, as though it's just
10 something that shouldn't be taken seriously, when, in
11 fact, 89 percent of girls reported in a magazine poll that
12 they've been sexually harassed in some way, and 40 percent
13 said it happened in daily occurrences.

14 Young women don't go to school to be sexually
15 harassed, they go to school to learn. And I don't think
16 that they should have to put up with it every day.

17 MS. RENO: I think that you make a good point, that
18 we can't kick this under the rug. We've got to focus on
19 it, realize that it is a part of a problem in our society,
20 and deal with it.

21 I think that there is much that can be done in terms
22 of programs within our schools and within our communities
23 to teach people respect for each other. The young man
24 that rapes is often doing it out of just disrespect and
25 lack of concern.

1 There is a way to deal with the stresses and strains
2 of these communities so that we resolve our disputes with
3 respect, with civility, with courtesy, through the
4 development of conflict resolution programs.

5 What are other examples? Perhaps we should hear from
6 Los Angeles.

7 MR. BRUNO: Yes. I suppose we should go to Los
8 Angeles, and let's see if there's a common thread, when
9 we've had a chance to talk to everybody.

10 Would Los Angeles like to go ahead with a question
11 for the Attorney General, please?

12 MR. GARCIA: One example we see here very common in
13 L.A. is the gangs and the drive-by shootings, which was
14 mentioned before in Washington and Chicago. Another
15 problem is drugs, and rapists, very common in South-
16 Central L.A., and pretty much throughout this city now.

17 It used to be that the West Side was a nice place to
18 live. It's happening all over the place now. There is
19 not a safe place now in the City of Los Angeles, I
20 wouldn't think.

21 MS. LUGMAN: I also would like to make a few comments
22 on that, in that our schools, I think the violence there
23 is also very important, because that's where we spend so
24 much of our time.

25 While in school we have to go through random searches

1 just to make sure that there are no weapons on campus. I
2 know that in Los Angeles there's been a recent rash of
3 violence on campus between our youth, and bringing guns,
4 and knives, and so forth on campus.

5 So that's something I really would like to address
6 also, just what can we do to try and keep those guns out
7 of our schools.

8 MS. RENO: I was in Los Angeles this past weekend
9 visiting a school, talking with some former gang members,
10 and gained some considerable perspectives of the problems
11 you face there.

12 Do you have other thoughts from Los Angeles?

13 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Also, I'd like to add to Amina's
14 that we have a lot of racial tension between the Hispanics
15 and Blacks, and other nationalities. And it's out of
16 hand, like at almost every high school located in South-
17 Central Los Angeles there have been race riots between the
18 two races. And I want to find solutions to that.

19 MS. RENO: Do you want to go to Washington?

20 MR. BRUNO: Well, just one second. I just want to
21 acknowledge that Senator Bob Kerry of Nebraska has come up
22 here to join us. And we'll be hearing from him a little
23 bit later.

24 Senator Kerry is a member of the appropriations
25 subcommittee that funds juvenile justice programs.

1 Attorney General, I think probably we should go to
2 Washington. Let's talk to them, and then we can come back
3 and discuss some of the common problems that have been
4 raised here.

5 Go ahead, Washington.

6 MS. REITER: I go to a school in Montgomery County.
7 And Montgomery County has a good reputation for having
8 nice schools, and that it's a nice area.

9 I think a lot of people don't think that there is,
10 you know, oh, there can't be a violence problem in
11 Montgomery County schools, but I think it's a problem
12 everywhere. There are problems with this everywhere.
13 It's not just in certain areas.

14 MS. RENO: I saw that, because I went out to a rally
15 in Montgomery County in Rockville, a rally against
16 violence.

17 And I was so impressed that the schools, the
18 community, physicians in the area, legislators, all were
19 coming together in a community effort that said, "We're
20 going to do something about this." And I thought it was
21 so impressive.

22 MS. REITER: I think the community and the
23 administration is trying hard, and it's -- I think they're
24 making a good effort, but I'm not sure how we're really
25 going to curb it. It's a difficult issue.

1 MS. ADEBOYE: I think another important point also is
2 that this atmosphere of fear that we have in our schools
3 is chipping away at our schools' effectiveness.

4 The fact that we have to go through metal detectors,
5 and be worried, and things like that make it very
6 difficult for some students to concentrate and focus on
7 the job at hand.

8 So I think another reason why eliminating violence in
9 our schools is so important is because it drains the
10 energy of the students every day. It's really harming our
11 learning process.

12 MR. HEGENS: And also the violence is taking a toll
13 to the point where the young lady in Chicago had mentioned
14 the fact that she is frightened every time she hears a car
15 screeching by, which is very true, because I'm from
16 Southeast Washington.

17 And every time you hear a car go by, when you hear
18 the rumors on television about the drive-by shootings,
19 someone got shot on their front porch, when you hear a car
20 go by, it puts you on the alert that something is going
21 on, something might happen.

22 The violence shouldn't have gotten to that point, to
23 where we have to fear every time we hear a screeching car
24 or a car backfire we think it's a gunshot.

25 MS. REITER: I think it's especially important in the

1 schools that, I mean I shouldn't have to go to school and
2 be scared for my safety. I should be able to go to school
3 and be able to learn.

4 MS. RENO: You should be able to sit on your front
5 porch and feel safe, too.

6 MS. REITER: Yes.

7 MS. RENO: You said something -- I don't know whether
8 we can do something about it. And the way I want to share
9 with you from my experience in these last four months is
10 that we can do something about it, if we all work together
11 and approach the problem from a common sense point of
12 view, that balances punishment with prevention, that
13 invests in our children early on, and gives them a chance
14 to grow as strong, constructive human beings.

15 We can develop conflict resolution programs.
16 Communities can come together. It won't happen over
17 night, and there's a tendency in America if something
18 doesn't happen over night, you think, well, it hasn't
19 happened.

20 But if we all work together in a sustained effort, I
21 think we can make such a difference, and I think you and
22 their expression makes that difference.

23 We've seen it, for example, in the usage of drugs in
24 America, which is on the decline, because you are telling
25 people, no, this is no good for me. And I think working

1 together in a painstaking, common sense way, we can have
2 an impact on violence.

3 MS. REITER: I certainly hope so.

4 MR. BRUNO: I wonder, our panel that's here in
5 Washington, perhaps they may have some specific questions
6 they would like to ask the Attorney General.

7 Does anybody have a question for the Attorney
8 General?

9 MR. HOSEIN: Yes. I do.

10 MR. BRUNO: Farouk Hosein.

11 MR. HOSEIN: Farouk Hosein. Yes. You said that
12 there are solutions. We've seen the same problems going
13 on for many years. And it seems to keep getting worse.

14 If the solutions are out there, and if they are
15 available, where are the changes going to come into
16 effect? When are we going to start feeling it's safe to
17 walk down the street?

18 When are we going to feel comfortable to go to school
19 and learn, and feel good about yourself, and just not
20 worry about the violence, and not worrying what other
21 people think?

22 We want to see actions take place. We always hear
23 solutions, that things can be done, and the community can
24 come together, but when will it come together, and when
25 will it take place?

1 MS. RENO: That's the reason that I feel so
2 comfortable in a community where you can see direct
3 action. I come from a community where we watched violent
4 crimes start to go down, through some successful actions,
5 while youth crime increased.

6 I had been warning for a long time that this was
7 going to happen, because we failed to invest in our
8 children.

9 You say that people have been talking about it, but
10 oftentimes they've talked about just building jails. They
11 haven't talked about what happens to these people when
12 they get out of jail.

13 They've not talked about what we can do to invest in
14 children, to make them grow as strong and healthy human
15 beings.

16 We've tried to do that in Miami, recognizing that
17 you're not going to change things over night. Things
18 sometimes get a little better, then they get worse.

19 What I'm suggesting to you is that if we all bond
20 together, get rid of the politics in this discussion,
21 Republicans and Democrats work together in a common sense
22 approach, the public and private sector, the youth and the
23 elderly, all together, and particularly in neighborhoods
24 where neighborhoods join together and say we're not going
25 to put up with this, we can make a difference.

1 To give you a specific example, we had a problem in
2 Miami with a particular area. We formed a group. A
3 community-friendly, highly respected police officer, a
4 public health nurse, and a social worker came together as
5 a team in an area where there had been a significant crime
6 problem, and a problem with a youth gang. They had so
7 changed the community within six months that the police
8 wanted to replicate it in other areas.

9 There are specifics, but it won't happen over night.
10 Part of the reason, for too long we have forgotten and
11 neglected our children.

12 We haven't provided them supervision after school and
13 in the evenings. We've not focused on them early on, when
14 we can really make the difference.

15 MR. HEGENS: Also, I have --

16 MR. BRUNO: Go ahead.

17 MR. HEGENS: When you say unity between the
18 governments, thinking on that note, how realistic is that,
19 up to this point?

20 Just because of the fact of all the guns out on the
21 street, now in Los Angeles, Chicago, and in D.C., we know
22 the guns aren't made in the ghetto. And we know that
23 somehow they are being transported into this country.

24 The thing I'm saying is the government and everyone
25 is so bent on us changing and the society changing, then

1 why are these guns being allowed on our streets?

2 I mean if they're collected by the police, and the
3 next week you see them out on the street again, somewhere
4 something is going wrong.

5 MS. RENO: For a long time I've been advocating for a
6 sensible gun control in America, guns that do not have
7 anything to do with sporting purposes, guns that are used
8 only to kill human beings simply don't belong here, from
9 my personal point of view.

10 Since coming into office I've asked the experts in
11 our office to do a thorough review of everything that's
12 been done to date, so that we can make a recommendation to
13 the president as to what an appropriate step would be in
14 terms of federal action.

15 What I've always advocated on a state basis is one
16 uniform law that says nobody can possess a weapon for any
17 purpose whatsoever, regardless of the kind of weapon,
18 unless they take a written and manual test that
19 demonstrates that they know how to safely and lawfully use
20 it. If they don't have the license for it, then they
21 should get punished for having it.

22 MR. BRUNO: I'm told that our panel in Los Angeles
23 has some questions for the Attorney General. So why don't
24 we go to Los Angeles, please?

25 MR. WILLIAMS: Well, I have sort of like a question,

1 and I have a solution for my question. We were talking
2 about all the problems that we have, and things like that.

3 All right. Let's talk about the solution to the
4 problems. For one, some guy in Washington was stating
5 that he sees no effort towards it. Well, we need
6 education first.

7 We need to educate ourselves about the problems.
8 That's why the problem is out of hand, because we're not
9 in touch with the next person.

10 It's like if I see her in the street hurting, I'm
11 going to pass her by, because that's the way we were all
12 brought up, to take care of our own, and don't worry about
13 the next man.

14 It's like we have to treat each other as a brother
15 and a sister, and don't look at the color of their skin,
16 look at the position we're in. It's sort of a messed up
17 position, because it's like we have no unity between us as
18 youngsters.

19 I mean our parents don't teach us that, because
20 they're too busy at work trying to get us out of these
21 ghettos, so called.

22 But the ghetto is where you learn everything, I feel,
23 because I was raised in the ghetto all the way from when I
24 was little. And I have a lot of love for the ghetto.

25 And it's like every time I hear a screeching car, I

1 know that it's not going to be a drive-by, because I'm
2 confronted with that all the time. It's like I have
3 knowledge to what's going on.

4 The people, I mean, like, you're in Washington, and
5 I'm in L.A.. You don't understand what I go through,
6 because I'm going through it on a first-hand basis, and
7 you're seeing it through the T.V.

8 And it's like the media portrays a lot of, you know,
9 like we say, amp it up, babe, you know, they make things
10 bigger than what it seems.

11 And it's like we need more education. We need to
12 talk to each other more. We need to treat each other as a
13 brother and a sister, and stop looking at the color of the
14 skin, basically.

15 MR. BRUNO: A good point there. One of the things
16 that does come through is the fact that what's happening
17 in Los Angeles is exactly what's happening in Washington,
18 and exactly what's happening in Chicago, and hundreds of
19 other cities, large and small, all over the United States.

20 MS. RENO: Does Chicago have some ideas or questions?

21 MR. LEE: I have some ideas. I have sort of like a
22 statement or a comment that I want to make, and you can
23 just kind of respond to it.

24 I haven't really formed a question. But some of this
25 violence and whatnot that I see in my community is just

1 being infiltrated into my community and guns are being
2 infiltrated into my community.

3 I see drug use, drug sales, prostitution. I see a
4 drug store, an alcohol-selling store on every corner of my
5 community. Those are some of the things that I see in my
6 community. I haven't ever seen a drive-by shooting, by I
7 know that it goes on in my community.

8 A comment that I have is that I think that the
9 Justice Department, and the CIA, the FBI, and other
10 government agencies should take more time to study the
11 ways in which guns and drugs are being brought into this
12 country.

13 I honestly believe that if the government really
14 wanted to stop the flow of guns, the flow of drugs into
15 this country, they could do it. That's what I personally
16 believe.

17 I think that the government should take more time --
18 young people are being criminalized, particularly black
19 youth, the black male, because he's an endangered species.

20 I think that the government should take more time to
21 study and work on the things that are going on in this
22 country, instead of world affairs.

23 MS. RENO: With respect to the drugs, one of the
24 first steps I took upon coming attorney general was to ask
25 that we study what's working and what's not working, in

1 terms of efforts in foreign countries, in terms of what
2 can effectively be done to interdict the stuff, and what
3 can be done to disrupt the supplies. But I also asked us
4 to focus on what can be done to provide treatment.

5 There are people who desperately want to get off
6 drugs, but can't afford treatment, and are now on a
7 waiting list for very limited treatment beds. I think we
8 can make even more of an impact on drug usage in America
9 if we approach it from a common sense point of view.

10 Your points about guns is well taken, and we are
11 doing that study to see what can be done in terms of
12 recommendations based on what's worked and what's not
13 worked in the past to limit guns in the United States,
14 that don't belong in the hands of our children.

15 AUDIENCE: Excuse me. Ms. Reno, I would also like to
16 say that I would like to see more programs for youths to
17 stop having so much violence, to stop making so much
18 violence.

19 I'm in a group, a drama group called Dare to be Bold.
20 We are affiliated with the Southeast Drug and Alcohol
21 Center. We do drama. I'd like to say that drama is a
22 very good way to vent our frustrations.

23 A lot of people walk around having lots of
24 frustrations. I can see them in my school. If you just
25 bump somebody accidentally in a crowded hall, they just want

1 to explode at you, and just scream at you, and have fights
2 and everything. Drama is a good way to vent our
3 frustration.

4 I really think that the government should put more
5 funding to the arts. I think the arts are very important
6 in the schools, in recreation, and I really don't think a
7 lot of people are looking forward to it.

8 I see lots of -- take graffiti. I see it all over
9 the place. Some of these graffiti artists are very, very
10 talented. If you do it on a wall in the alley, or in a
11 subway, it's selfish art.

12 What I mean by saying selfish art, nobody wants to
13 walk through a subway. And you cannot appreciate it in an
14 alley. You cannot appreciate it in a subway. You cannot
15 appreciate it in a hallway.

16 I'm also in a group. It's a summer job. It's called
17 Gallery 37. And it pays youngsters to do art work, and we
18 also sell it at the end of our six weeks. It's a very
19 good program. I would love to see more programs for young
20 people, I really would, because it helps.

21 MS. RENO: One of the things that I felt strongly
22 about from my experience before, as you watch so many
23 children with free time after school and in the evening,
24 because their parents are working or are not there, we
25 could do so much if we invested in programs, not just

1 sports programs, but drama programs, or computer programs
2 for that computer whiz kid, other programs for the
3 youngster who knows engines.

4 We could do so much if we channeled our young
5 peoples' energies into interesting, effective, and
6 educational programs after school and in the evening.

7 But I'd like you all to touch on something that
8 you -- we don't have kindergartners here, and we don't
9 have the very young. I want you all to remember something
10 that doctors have taught me.

11 The most formative time in a child's life is in the
12 age of zero to three. Fifty percent of all learned human
13 responses are learned in the first year, and the concept
14 of reward, and punishment, and conscience is developed in
15 the ages of zero to three.

16 We not only have to focus on our children and our
17 youth in school and after school, but we have got to make
18 a major effort in the United States towards giving our
19 youngsters, our very young babies, a nurturing, thriving
20 environment, where they can grow.

21 If a child doesn't learn the concept of reward and
22 punishment at that time, what good is punishment going to
23 do ten or fifteen years from now?

24 In short, we've got to look at the whole of a young
25 person's life, and intervene at points where we can enable

1 them to have half a fighting chance to grow as strong,
2 constructive human beings.

3 MR. BRUNO: I'd like to just briefly acknowledge
4 another member Congress who just joined us. And we'll be
5 hearing from him as well a little bit later on. That's
6 Congressman Xavier Becerra, who is a Democrat from
7 California, and he's a member of both the education and
8 the judiciary committees in the House.

9 Attorney General, do you want to go ahead?

10 MS. RENO: Washington, do you have thoughts?

11 MR. HEGENS: Yes. I do. You were saying that we
12 should have more programs to give to the young people of
13 our society.

14 I'm from the inner city, Southeast Washington. We
15 don't have programs, or the government doesn't fund
16 programs like that in most of our schools down there.
17 It's like we have all the free time in the world that we
18 want to after school, I mean there's just -- anything we
19 can do.

20 It's sad to say, because I know in Virginia and
21 Maryland, they have exceptional programs for young
22 students.

23 It's like when you come to the -- when it gets here
24 to D.C., in the inner city, when you go to school like
25 Ballou, Hartinger High School, other schools like that,

1 that I attended, we don't have programs like that.

2 We'd love programs like that. We'd love to have the
3 facilities and accessories, and all the things that come
4 along with programs like that, but we just don't.

5 I always think everything to me is a conspiracy.
6 That's how I view things, because it angers me when I see
7 things like this, and I know the government has funding
8 for these things, but they elect not to use them, and I
9 don't understand why.

10 MS. RENO: Well, Thomas, I came to Washington with
11 people asking me why did the attorney general, who is
12 supposed to be in charge of law enforcement, come to
13 Washington talking about children so much?

14 The reason I came to do that, and started talking
15 about children, is that I think we've got to provide a
16 balanced approach.

17 Farouk correctly asked: When is government going to
18 do something? Sometimes I get frustrated, because it's at
19 such a slow pace.

20 I can't promise you anything, except that I'm going
21 to continue to speak out, to do everything I can to make
22 sure that the resources of government are developed in
23 partnership with communities and with the people to truly
24 serve the people in the best possible fashions.

25 I think the best investment we can make in America

1 today is to make an investment in our children, to give
2 them a chance to grow as strong and constructive human
3 beings.

4 What I'm anxious to hear from you all is what do you
5 think works and what doesn't work, because I don't want to
6 be the attorney general telling people what to do.

7 I want to be learning from the American people, from
8 parents, from grandparents, from the youth of America what
9 they ~~think works~~, because I learned one thing long ago:
10 Trust the people. They know best.

11 MR. HOSEIN: Ms. Reno, I know in D.C., in the senior
12 high schools, we had street law competition, which was a
13 mock trial for -- there were two teams based in each
14 school.

15 There was a program, when it started out -- it's been
16 in the schools for several years now. I'm not exactly
17 sure how long, but Thomas and I, we were in it.

18 And one thing that it did was, we had a teacher from
19 Georgetown Law Center that came and taught us, and he
20 related to us. He was young enough, he was on our level,
21 but he could still teach us. He made us feel good about
22 ourselves.

23 When you have teachers that make you feel good about
24 yourself and make class interesting, it makes you want to
25 learn. It makes you want to try and excel.

1 When we came, we had many classes outside of school.
2 We were out practicing like three, four, or five nights a
3 week until 10:00 or 11:00. We put into it. We wanted to
4 win.

5 It was more than just a class for the credit, it was
6 a class for ourselves. We wanted to learn. And it made
7 you really feel good about yourself.

8 I think if you would put out the programs for the
9 kids to do it, it's not a matter of participation and what
10 you think they may or may not do, because we want to do
11 the stuff.

12 Like Thomas said, we'd love to have the things, but
13 they're simply not out there. This is one program that
14 was there. Everybody in the class participated. It was a
15 team thing.

16 If we could learn how to work as a team, like the guy
17 said in Los Angeles, you know, we've got to treat each
18 other as brothers and sisters and work together. If we
19 can do that, that would eliminate a lot of problems.

20 MS. RENO: Farouk, I think you've hit one of the most
21 important issues, how we make people feel good about
22 themselves, not short term, not I feel good today, but to
23 develop self-respect, to develop esteem takes time.

24 For these last four months I've been hearing from my
25 teachers, from my fourth grade teacher, from my American

1 History teacher in high school, who have written to tell
2 me that they were proud of me.

3 But what I've written back to them is to tell them
4 that they made a difference in my life, because they
5 encouraged me. They made me feel like I could do things,
6 that I could do better, and they gave me a pat on the back
7 when I did.

8 I think we have to free our teachers' time to be able
9 to do that. We've asked our teachers to do so much. I
10 mean they are the preventers of violence. They're the
11 disciplinarians. And more and more teachers are becoming
12 disciplinarians rather than teachers.

13 We've got to develop programs in our schools that
14 free teachers' time to teach and to challenge people.
15 It's ideas like yours that can make such a difference, in
16 terms of what we put together.

17 The one thing that I want to stress again, though, is
18 it doesn't happen over night. You don't change this over
19 night, but taking the piece of experience that you had,
20 putting it together with another, reaching out to help
21 another person, slowly we can rebuild the fabric of
22 communities so that violence is not a way of life, and
23 that people just say, no, I don't do it.

24 MR. BRUNO: I wonder, as long as they've joined us
25 ahead of schedule, which we appreciate, I wonder if

1 Senator Kerry or Congressman Becerra might have a comment
2 to make on what they've been hearing this morning.

3 SENATOR KERRY: Well, first of all, I'll just say
4 that I've learned a great deal just in the short period of
5 time, listening to all of you. And I'd love to hear some
6 of your specific solutions to the problem.

7 I must say, though, I have voted for waiting periods
8 on guns, and I have voted, in fact, to ban assault rifles.
9 And I must say I'm deeply skeptical.

10 I heard a round of applause when it was suggested
11 that it was a solution. I must say I'm deeply skeptical
12 that we're going to see if some magical change is a
13 consequence of that.

14 Indeed, I must say that I'm deeply skeptical when
15 there is an immediate rush to pass some new government
16 program.

17 I've seen government programs fail. And I've seen,
18 in fact, considerable amount of disappointment in the
19 community when some government is established, and then
20 doesn't work.

21 I believe that individuals have dignity and deserve
22 to be treated as people that are special, but I also
23 believe that individuals have to take some considerable
24 responsibility for themselves.

25 They've got to decide. They've got to work. They've

1 got to motivate themselves, no matter what's happened to
2 them in their lives.

3 However, unless there's an adult, a hero, a teacher,
4 a parent, a neighbor, who has the capacity and willingness
5 to be kind, to extend themselves, to protect, to teach, to
6 rejoice in that moment when an individual makes progress,
7 I believe it's going to be difficult for an individual, no
8 matter how well motivated they are, to make progress.

9 MR. BRUNO: Congressman Becerra, and my apology for
10 mispronouncing your name there at that last round.

11 CONGRESSMAN BECERRA: No problem. I would just like
12 to say that I would agree with just about everything that
13 the students have said.

14 And I think what we see is that there is a bridge
15 missing between what they're saying, which is a need for
16 these types of activities, whether it's gang diversion, or
17 jobs, or stopping kids from dropping out of school, and
18 actually the implementation of those types of programs on
19 the federal, state, and local levels.

20 I think what we need to do more effectively,
21 especially those of us who are in elected office, is
22 convince the American public that these activities are
23 absolutely necessary.

24 When I talk to people in Los Angeles, where I
25 represent, that we spend \$4,200 a year to keep a youth in

1 school, yet that same youth, we'll spend \$33,000 to keep
2 that kid locked up if he commits a crime.

3 When we start seeing those grave differences and that
4 disparity, people begin to wake up and see the need for
5 these types of activities that these students are talking
6 about.

7 MR. BRUNO: Thank you, Congressman and Senator Kerry.
8 We'll come back to you a little bit later in the program
9 as well.

10 I'm told that there are some things in Los Angeles
11 that people want to bring up, so why don't we go back to
12 Los Angeles?

13 MS. VILLAREAL: I have two comments for Attorney
14 General Reno and a lot of people in Congress, to just let
15 you know that I find it astounding that our American
16 government can stop a boat of Haitians from coming into
17 this country, but they cannot stop drug shipments.

18 It's not the Latino youth in East L.A., it's not the
19 African-American youth in Chicago or Washington, D.C. that
20 are bringing in the drugs, it's coming from outside, and
21 that needs to stop.

22 The drug scene is a major factor in the deterioration
23 of America, and the fact that not enough is done to stop
24 it from coming into our country, and putting more funding,
25 more programs for youth in the cities, in the urban areas,

1 where it's greatly needed.

2 Earlier, you also mentioned, Attorney General Reno,
3 that in Miami there is a program where you sent a police
4 office, a health professional, and another professional
5 into a community.

6 I don't exactly agree with that. I think community
7 needs to start with the people in the community. There
8 needs to be more self-governing. It needs community
9 organizing.

10 People know in their communities what the issues are.
11 They're the ones who live there. They're the ones who see
12 the crime every day. They are the ones who see the drive-
13 by shootings. They are the ones who see their daughters
14 raped in front of their homes or a few blocks away.

15 Community organizing is very important. And when you
16 put the members of the community, you empower them. You
17 give them the freedom to say this is what's wrong.

18 And these are the solutions to do it. This is what
19 we want to see, then I think that will come together. It
20 needs to be from within, not people coming in and telling
21 the people in the community to do, because everybody has
22 been telling students what to do, people in the
23 communities what to do, from our politicians, from people,
24 all the way from lower government, to higher government.
25 It's us. It's us, because we see it every day.

1 The Congressman said that he has learned so much from
2 just sitting in on the past couple of minutes. This is
3 daily life for us, to know that a friend of mine was raped
4 less than ten feet away from me in school, to know that a
5 person who is sitting next to me in my history class was
6 nearly gunned down by a drive-by shooting.

7 This is reality, and I think a lot of people need to
8 realize that. You bring to back it back to our level.

9 MR. BRUNO: I'm sorry to interrupt. Your points are
10 very, very good, but the Attorney General is going to have
11 to leave us soon, so if you don't mind, could we go to her
12 for reaction to what you've just said, please?

13 MS. RENO: Actually, I think she's right. I think we
14 should hear her out.

15 MR. BRUNO: Okay. Go ahead then. My apologies to
16 you.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. REITER: I think that -- I'm not exactly sure how
19 the power would trickle down, but we just need to realize
20 that citizens are not given the voice to say what exactly
21 is wrong.

22 We have representatives in our Congress, but I have
23 not heard of one representative holding a town meeting in
24 my area. I have not heard by councilman come and say I
25 want to hear what the problems are.

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1 Why do you not feel safe as a woman walking just to
2 the bus stop across the street from your house? Why do
3 you not feel safe about going to school in your area? Why
4 don't you want to go to school in your home district?

5 I don't go to school in my home district because I'm
6 afraid of the violence that is there, and I'd rather go to
7 a "white, upper middle class" community, where I can get a
8 better education, because I know that I won't have as much
9 trouble with violence on my campus. But as I saw last
10 year, that's not true.

11 We had a "mini-riot" on the campus, where a Latino
12 faction and a African-American faction broke out and
13 literally just created massive mayhem on our campus. Two
14 students were injured, and many people were arrested.
15 What kind of environment is that?

16 And another thing, the environment that we live in is
17 not very conducive to our upbringing. How can we walk
18 down the street and see graffiti, see trash, and a lot of
19 times we don't have surroundings that support us, that can
20 foster us? There are not enough libraries, and there's
21 obviously not enough funding going to education.

22 You look at our school systems, and everyone is like,
23 oh, the high school students can't even read. Well, gee,
24 I wonder why, because not enough people are putting money
25 into our education, public education.

1 Our public university systems are failing. We don't
2 have enough cultural events. We don't have enough things
3 that bring the community together.

4 I think the government should start looking at
5 domestic affairs, looking at their cities, and wondering
6 why are they falling apart.

7 We're saving people in other worlds, when there are
8 people who can't even eat, who don't even have homes, who
9 live in their cars.

10 And we're saving other people in other nations for
11 the name of democracy, when there are people here who are
12 dying, who don't even know that they have the freedom to
13 have proper and affordable housing, when they're starving,
14 and their children can't even eat, because they go to
15 school with hardly any proper clothes, and they're not
16 given respect in school.

17 There are just a lot of issues that need to be
18 focused on in the cities and in the area.

19 MS. RENO: Let me point out that the team that you
20 say came in didn't come in. That team lived in that
21 neighborhood.

22 We did exactly what you talked about in terms of
23 going to the community, and the community came to us and
24 said we're sick and fed up with the shootings. We talked
25 with the leaders in the community, and they said we need

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1 some help.

2 We identified people who lived in and around the
3 community, and their whole purpose -- the place that the
4 program started was selected by the community.

5 The whole purpose was to empower people, to help that
6 lady who was struggling to prevent her son from getting
7 into delinquency, to help her do it, to give her strength
8 to get her a job, to give her a feeling of self-
9 sufficiency.

10 It was an incredible experience to watch these people
11 working with a community organizer who was already there
12 really begin to build a neighborhood.

13 One of the tragedies was that it was hit by Hurricane
14 Andrew, and they turned their energies from rebuilding --
15 from building anew, to rebuilding.

16 And they had a strength and a sense of purpose that
17 was amazing to watch. They're in the process of doing
18 that now, from community to community, trying to identify
19 people who come from that community who can make a
20 difference. So your point is well taken.

21 This past weekend I was in Los Angeles. I held a
22 town meeting. I went to an elementary school. I listened
23 to students. I talked to former gang members.

24 You can teach me so much. All of America can teach
25 us so much, but at the same time I think the Senator is

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1 right. We need to work together. Each has to assume
2 responsibility.

3 You say what do we do with the trash on the street.
4 It's fascinating to see some kids joining together in the
5 community painting out the graffiti, and picking up the
6 trash, and cleaning up their neighborhood, joining with
7 their parents.

8 How do we get government to come together? The
9 Senator is right. Here is another government program.

10 My argument is, let's not talk about another
11 government program. Let's talk about taking what we have
12 at the levels of state, the local, and federal
13 governments.

14 Let's take private sectors, let's take communities,
15 and let's come together as a true partnership, listening
16 to communities and what they need, as to how we provide
17 our children a future, while at the same time, providing
18 limits and structures that say we're not going to tolerate
19 violence.

20 I look forward to working with you. The one point
21 that I would ask everybody: My telephone number is 202-
22 514-2001. Now, once I went to an elementary school and I
23 wrote the number on the board, and I heard some little
24 boys in the background laughing.

25 When I got back to work they were calling me within a

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1 half-an-hour, because they didn't think I was going to
2 answer their call.

3 And they said, "Oh my goodness, you really do talk on
4 the telephone." Don't tease me like the little boys did,
5 but when you have ideas, I want to know about them. They
6 make such a difference.

7 MR. BRUNO: We've got some people here in Washington
8 who are standing at the microphone. They've been standing
9 very patiently. I'd like to invite the young gentleman
10 who is at the microphone here in Washington, go ahead and
11 ask the Attorney General a question.

12 MR. WILSON: My name is Joe Wilson. I've got a
13 couple of statements --

14 MR. BRUNO: Could you move closer to the mike,
15 please?

16 MR. WILSON: My name is Joe Wilson. I've got a
17 couple of statements to make. I'm 21. I'm a former drug
18 dealer. I want to make a comment to a statement here made
19 about the programs in D.C.

20 I was a former drug dealer, but I found -- I went out
21 there and educated myself about what is out there, what
22 opportunities I could use for myself, and I found the D.C.
23 service corps.

24 There's many programs like this that are out there
25 making youth, in general, because these services corps,

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1 age ranges from 17 to 23, where they go out and do
2 volunteer work, and get paid \$100 a week, just a little
3 something to help them for lunch and stuff like that.
4 There's a lot of programs in D.C. that are in here that a
5 lot of people don't know about.

6 The first thing you have to do is educate yourself
7 and know what's out there, so you can take advantage of
8 what's out there, because if you don't, then that's it.

9 MS. RENO: I think that's an excellent point.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. RENO: And just think of what young people have
12 done. They've gone off to fight wars for the nation,
13 World War II, just think of what we did through the
14 National Service Corps, through the Washington Service
15 Corps, all that we could do if we harnessed all the energy
16 of our young people who care so much about our future, so
17 much about America.

18 And as a number of young people have said, let's
19 start focusing on our streets and our communities, and
20 building.

21 MR. BRUNO: There's another gentleman from Washington
22 who has --

23 AUDIENCE: Yes. Attorney General Reno, I'd like to
24 ask a question. When you said you were attorney (sic) in
25 Dade County, and you went to visit a school every week, I

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1 know you go across the nation and visit schools, but our
2 problem in D.C. is very evident to everybody in the
3 nation.

4 I think we need people like all of you sitting on the
5 board, because you are in charge of running our country,
6 and creating laws, and getting them passed, and enforcing
7 them.

8 We need you here in D.C. also as much as you are
9 across the nation, because a lot of our schools here have
10 very, very serious problems, and everybody in the country
11 knows that.

12 And we need positive reinforcements like you all to
13 come to our schools to speak, so our kids can see things
14 like that, because they're not in touch with everything.

15 I mean I always thought that knowledge is power, or
16 being sociable with others is power, because I mean that's
17 how you get knowledge.

18 I mean everybody can intermingle and give their views
19 and you give your views, and they're not really taught
20 that. They're just taught like the gun is power.

21 And they see IT out on the street, their friends
22 getting shot, yeah, that was cool. He got shot. Maybe we
23 need to have books, somebody do that to do something, but
24 we have to get something done about this reading thing
25 soon.

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1 MS. RENO: I couldn't agree with you more. Before
2 school was out I had gone to two schools. One school was
3 a school that the United States Marshall Service was
4 providing tutors for.

5 One of the most encouraging aspects, I went up to the
6 school and was greeted by a young man. It was River
7 Terrace. I asked him what he was going to do when he grew
8 up.

9 And he said I'm going to be a marine biologist. I
10 said. how did you learn about marine biology. And he said
11 the marshals brought a marine biologist and I got
12 fascinated.

13 It is my goal that all of us, attorneys general, and
14 everybody in the Department of Justice, all of us will
15 have an opportunity to volunteer. If all of us became
16 concerned about one student, we could make a difference.

17 In Miami, I have a young lady who is now graduating
18 from high school, and I've served as her mentor since the
19 seventh or eighth grade.

20 If each of us became responsible for somebody else,
21 in terms of trying to encourage them, and open new
22 horizons for them, and teach them other areas of interest,
23 all of us could make such a difference.

24 MS. BRUNO: Do we have time for one quick question
25 from Chicago? We haven't been to you for a minute.

1 MR. FARR: My name is Quincy, and I'm from Milwaukee.
2 We have two programs sponsored by the University of
3 Wisconsin, Extension. One is called the Youth Futures
4 Impact Center.

5 It's the center in the community where children can
6 go and get help on the problems they -- on the streets, or
7 you can go on field trips, be with people that talk to you
8 about what the problems are, and the community is
9 together, and the people in the community are sponsors.

10 And they also have another group called the 4-H Club,
11 where children come to the club, get talked to, and other
12 children become leaders, and help other young children
13 look up to them.

14 MS. RENO: I think again this is an example of what
15 we can do if we can work together. It can be done, Amy.
16 We can make a difference. We can solve this problem. It
17 won't be done over night, but it will be done by
18 communities and everybody working together.

19 As I said, I listen to everyone, because the answers
20 are coming from the American people. They are coming from
21 our youth. I mean for you to use that telephone number.

22 I mean for you to let me know what works. I
23 understand that I will be receiving a report based on your
24 recommendations, and I can't wait to get it. Thanks so
25 much for being with me today.

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1 (Applause.)

2 MR. BRUNO: Thank you, Attorney General Reno. You
3 have been very gracious with your time to us this morning,
4 and most of all, we appreciate your insights, your
5 thoughts, and your interests, your willingness to listen.
6 Thank you so much for being with us.

7 Now, I'd like to introduce some -- why don't I
8 introduce, I'll reintroduce the congressional group that
9 is here now, because we've had two more people join us.

10 First of all, there is Senator Robert Kerry, Bob
11 Kerry, of Nebraska, who is a member of the appropriations
12 subcommittee that funds the juvenile justice programs.

13 Next to him is Congressman Xavier Becerra, from
14 California, who is a member of both the Education and the
15 House Judiciary Committee.

16 And we now have Congress Jim Moran, from Virginia,
17 who is a former mayor of Alexandria, and is a member of
18 the subcommittee that funds the juvenile justice programs.

19 And just joining us now is Senator Carol Moseley-
20 Braun, from Illinois, who is a member of the Subcommittee
21 on Juvenile Justice. So I'd like to thank the members of
22 Congress.

23 Oh, whoops, you just came in and I didn't see him
24 there, it's Senator Herbert Kohl, of Wisconsin, who is
25 chairman of the Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice.

1 So I'd like to thank our congressional panel for
2 joining us. Let's go ahead and go back to the students in
3 Chicago, Los Angeles, and Washington.

4 One of the things that struck me in the remarks we
5 heard earlier is that there was a time when I was in
6 school, when other generations were in school, where if
7 you kept your nose clean, and you stayed out of trouble,
8 you were in no danger.

9 What we've heard this morning is that no matter what
10 you do, no matter how much you try and stay out of
11 trouble, you can still be in great danger in the cities
12 and the schools of America today.

13 I'd like to ask some of our students to comment.
14 Perhaps they can tell us how their own personal lives have
15 had to change, how they and their families and friends
16 have had to adjust because of the danger that is around
17 them, not only out in the streets, but in the schools as
18 well.

19 Let's go to Los Angeles first and perhaps somebody
20 there would like to pick up on that.

21 MS. WASHINGTON: Yes. I'd like to have a short
22 comment on that. Just in daily life, I find that my
23 family has to take certain, just unreasonable precautions
24 to stay safe nowadays.

25 I mean we cage ourselves in with bars now. I'm sure

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1 that many other cities, like Chicago and Washington, have
2 to do the same thing. You have to cage yourself in just
3 to stay safe, and just to keep that false sense of
4 security, which we see can't even work now, because of the
5 drive-by shootings.

6 We also have to make sure every door is locked.
7 We're just going through unreasonable lengths to try and
8 stay safe. You can't go outside at night, like I've heard
9 here today. Our lives are just so limited, because of the
10 violence in our communities.

11 I know that we are trying to talk about just personal
12 safety right now, but also I'd like to touch on just the
13 fact that as a solution, I think that we need to invest in
14 our youth, and their opinions, and their ideas.

15 I don't think we spend enough time trying to find out
16 exactly what do we want for ourselves, what can we do for
17 ourselves. I think that we need to spend more time
18 looking at programs that students can help themselves,
19 instead of having an adult help them.

20 So we need to look at, let's say students can clean
21 up their own parks, instead of having someone else come in
22 and do that.

23 I think we need to spend more time having students
24 actually going throughout their schools and trying to
25 mentor students.

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1 So we need to make sure that we listen to our youth,
2 and listen to their ideas, and make sure that we respond
3 to that, because we do have creativity, we do have new
4 ways of looking at things.

5 MR. BRUNO: Does anyone else in Los Angeles have a
6 comment on that? If not, we'll go on to Chicago.

7 AUDIENCE: Yes.

8 MR. BRUNO: Go ahead, Los Angeles. Could you keep it
9 just a little bit shorter, so that everybody gets a
10 chance, okay? Thank you.

11 AUDIENCE: With all these programs that we have to
12 help out the youth, I don't really think they're doing a
13 very good job, because they're there for you for a month
14 or two, and they don't -- they expect you to change over
15 night, and that's not going to happen. It takes years for
16 a person to change, especially the youth of today.

17 I think every youth should have a role model.
18 There's not very many of them out there any more, because
19 there should be someone out there to listen to at all
20 times.

21 MR. BRUNO: Thank you. Incidentally, I want to
22 especially thank our group in Los Angeles for getting up
23 early in order to take part in this. It's three hours
24 earlier there.

25 Let's go to Chicago. I wonder if people in Chicago,

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1 if you could tell us some of the things that you've had to
2 do, not only yourself personally, but your family and your
3 friends, in order to protect yourselves in your schools,
4 as well as on the streets.

5 MS. WASHINGTON: I would like to comment on that.
6 These days when you're walking down the street you have to
7 watch your back, because there is always somebody on the
8 corner, or somebody in the gangway that's waiting for you
9 to do something foolish.

10 For instance, if I have a purse on my shoulder, I
11 have to hold it tightly when I see someone walking towards
12 me. I shouldn't have to do that.

13 I should be able to trust anybody that I see on the
14 street. We used to say good morning or how do you do to
15 everybody walking down the street. Now, it's like stay
16 away from me, and I'll stay away from you. That shouldn't
17 be that way.

18 When we go in the house at night, we have to lock up
19 the doors, like you said, or have bars, lock them all up,
20 and be scared to go to sleep. If you hear a noise, you
21 jump.

22 My grandmother recently, we heard a backfire on the
23 street. She got scared and thought it was a gunshot, and
24 woke everybody up in the house and made us lay on the
25 floor. And it was only a backfire. We shouldn't be that

1 afraid in our own home. It's ridiculous.

2 I think a problem is that we don't know each other
3 any more in the communities, like next-door neighbors, we
4 used to know, like I could go next door and the lady next
5 door would watch me while I was in her house.

6 Now we're scared to go next door, because we don't
7 know what's going to happen from the time we leave our
8 door to their door.

9 So it's like we are being punished for being good.
10 The bad people rule the world, so being good is wrong. So
11 that way everybody else is turning to being bad, if that's
12 right. That's the way the community and the society are
13 leading them.

14 I think another thing is education is not a priority
15 any more. Like here in Chicago, we might not even open
16 schools in September. So what else are we supposed to do
17 then to go out there and do whatever it is to make money?

18 If we don't have an education or somewhere to go,
19 then what are we going to do? It's wrong for us not to
20 have education, because living in America, we have a right
21 to have education, a right to be free, a right to walk
22 down the street. And by us not being bad, then we can't
23 do that, and it's not fair. And I think something should
24 be done about it.

25 MR. BRUNO: Anybody else in Chicago? Thank you.

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1 (Applause.)

2 MR. BRUNO: Anybody else in Chicago on the question
3 of personal safety?

4 AUDIENCE: Yes. I'd like to comment, especially on
5 something that Shannon said, about the school being a
6 place for people to go.

7 The school needs to be an alternative to being on the
8 street, to being on the street corner, because it's out on
9 the streets and the street corners that you have gang
10 fights, that you have drive-bys, but if the schools can be
11 used as community centers, a place for people to learn,
12 for people to learn about the community, discuss the
13 issues, to discuss what's going on, a place for there to
14 be afternoon programs, where people can go after schools,
15 so that they're not out on the street.

16 Around my schools they have dances. Well, some kids
17 can't go to the dances, because their parents don't want
18 them on the street after school before the dance, and
19 there's nowhere for them to go.

20 If the school was provided it as a community center
21 where people could stay, where they could talk, then there
22 would be less people on the street, and perhaps less
23 violence.

24 Also, within the school, and personal experiences,
25 I've seen violence at dances, blood on the floor of the

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1 dances, instead of confetti, because people bring the
2 violence to the school.

3 It's a consequence of the violence in the community,
4 it gets continued. The violence continues within the
5 school building, when it should be that the school is a
6 safe haven.

7 There's two parts to that. The school needs to be
8 safe, so maybe in some schools you need metal detectors.
9 I mean I would call that an extreme, but the school needs
10 to be safe, and it also needs to be a haven.

11 It needs to be a place where people go, so it's an
12 afternoon, and you're thinking where can I go. Maybe if
13 the school was a place where could go, where there would
14 be activities, where there could be day care for children,
15 for teenagers who have children, so that they don't have
16 to worry about their children, and so that their children
17 can be protected during the day. The school could
18 function as the community center.

19 MR. BRUNO: That's a very good point. At this point,
20 we'll come to Washington on this same subject in just a
21 moment, but I'd like to turn to our congressional panel,
22 and have them react at this point, especially Senator
23 Carol Moseley-Braun, who is the senator from Illinois.
24 I'm sure that much of what you're describing in Chicago
25 she is more than familiar with. Senator, go ahead.

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1 SENATOR MOSELEY-BRAUN: Thank you very much, Mr.
2 Bruno. First, I'd like to say how impressive these young
3 people are.

4 I mean I have never heard more succinct statements of
5 the problem anywhere, and they are to be congratulated,
6 and you are to be congratulated for giving us this
7 opportunity to have this dialogue.

8 I just wish every member of the United States
9 Congress and every member of the Senate could see this and
10 could hear this, because I think it's a lesson and a
11 message that needs to be heard.

12 The second thing I want to point to, is the point is
13 so very well taken, the gentleman just raised the issue of
14 the schools.

15 We have a proposal here now for midnight basketball.
16 I don't know if I mentioned it to Senator Kohl or not, who
17 is the chairman of our Juvenile Justice Subcommittee, but
18 midnight basketball is precisely that.

19 You may have heard of it already, because we have
20 pilots for midnight basketball in Chicago right now, but
21 what it says is that the young people should be able to
22 come to the schools after school hours, and need to be
23 involved with athletics, and sports, and other kinds of
24 activities that would be an alternative to being on the
25 street.

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1 And it would be a safe environment. It would be an
2 environment that would be a nurturing environment, one
3 that would help with tutoring and any number of different
4 kinds of activities.

5 We've proposed that. I proposed that, along with
6 others here in the Congress. So those are among the
7 efforts that we are taking, but clearly we have to address
8 the larger question of the violence, and the fear, and the
9 personal safety issues.

10 And Senator Kohl and I, and I am able to turn to him,
11 sit on the Juvenile Justice Subcommittee of the Judiciary
12 Committee. And we are very much interested in how to
13 approach these issues, so that young people can begin to
14 feel like they can make a difference, that you can change
15 it.

16 It doesn't have to be this way. We don't have to
17 live in fear. We can take our communities back, and we
18 can make a difference and provide opportunity in this
19 country again, and all we have to do is have the will to
20 do it. So I want to congratulate you, and I think this is
21 an important first step.

22 MR. BRUNO: Senator Kohl, do you want to pick up on
23 that?

24 SENATOR KOHL: Well, thank you very much, Mr.
25 Chairman. I am pleased with my colleagues to have the

1 opportunity to be here today.

2 Along with Carol Moseley-Braun and our colleagues, I
3 am pleased to have the opportunity to say a couple of
4 words to people who are both here and listening to this
5 program this morning.

6 As Senator Moseley-Braun indicated, she and I are on
7 the Juvenile Justice Subcommittee, and so we deal at great
8 length and in quite great depth with the problems that
9 we're discussing today, and I'm sure all of you are aware,
10 as she and I are aware, of the depth of the problem, in
11 terms of violence and lack of educational opportunity for
12 young people in our communities across the country today.

13 I think it stems from the fact that young people
14 don't have the opportunity to vote. Young people don't
15 contribute to campaigns, and the reality of that is that
16 too oftentimes, in fact, most times, young people don't
17 get the kind of considerations of all sorts from levels of
18 government, local state, and federal, the people from
19 other segments of our society do, who both contribute to
20 campaigns, and also vote.

21 In a democracy, people who represent people represent
22 people for the most part who (a) contribute and (b) vote.

23 It's a part of what democracy is all about, but the
24 bad part is that young people who don't contribute, don't
25 vote, don't get the kind of representation that they

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1 should get.

2 I think that that is at the root of the problems that
3 we're discussing and trying to confront in our society
4 today, but young people have to find a way to get around
5 that problem, of the fact that they don't vote, and they
6 don't contribute.

7 The way that you can get around it is by demanding,
8 demanding that you get your fair share of attention and
9 resources from governments at all levels to see to it that
10 you're safe in your communities, and that when you go to
11 school, those of you who want to learn, really have an
12 opportunity to learn.

13 People in the positions of official responsibility
14 have to respond to that. If we don't respond to that,
15 then we're not doing our duty.

16 Your responsibility, hopefully, is to demand that we
17 provide safety for you and your communities, and that we
18 provide educational opportunities for those of you. And
19 I'm sure it's the overwhelming majority who really want to
20 learn.

21 So we have to work together. We in positions of
22 responsibility have to respond, and you all have to
23 demand. It is your right and your responsibility to
24 demand that we serve your real needs, which, let's face
25 it, we're not serving adequately by far today.

1 MR. BRUNO: Before we go back to the students, I
2 would like to give both Congressman Becerra and
3 Congressman Moran a chance to also make some comments at
4 this point.

5 Congressman Becerra, why don't you go ahead, and then
6 we'll get to Jim Moran.

7 CONGRESSMAN BECERRA: Thank you. I would like to
8 point out in the next few days we in Congress will have a
9 chance to pass one of President Clinton's premiere
10 programs, the National Service Program.

11 It's amazing to me that there are still people in
12 Congress who are objecting to this particular program,
13 which would help do some of the things that our students
14 here are talking about.

15 We're talking about paying someone less than the
16 minimum wage, giving them a \$5,000 grant for tuition for
17 them to go on to college. This is an investment that this
18 country will be making in these individuals to go on and
19 become productive citizens, yet we have objections in
20 Congress against a program like National Service.

21 What we have to understand, of course, is that
22 government, as we've said before, will never fully finance
23 the programs, nor should it fully finance all the programs
24 that we need to help our students, but we can leverage the
25 money to do so.

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1 MR. BRUNO: Okay. Congressman Moran, not only is he
2 a member of Congress, but he was the mayor of a city, and
3 certainly has first-hand knowledge of the problem. Go
4 ahead, sir.

5 CONGRESSMAN MORAN: Well, thank you, Hal. But even
6 beyond being mayor and in Congress, I agreed to
7 participate more out of my role as a parent.

8 I have two children that went through T.C. Williams
9 High School. They're in their early twenties now. But
10 things were different, even five or six years ago.

11 I have a 14 year old who is in junior high now, and
12 reminds me every day of the threat of violence in our
13 public school system.

14 He goes to G.W. Junior High, and will be going to
15 T.C. He's grounded for the summer, partly out of his
16 behavior, but more so because his parents fear for the
17 situation that exists out there.

18 But I also have a four-year-old and a three-year-
19 old, and if things don't change dramatically by the time
20 they get to junior high, I don't know what we're going to
21 do.

22 Every year, for the last several years, things seem
23 to have gotten worse. I do think the National Service
24 Program is going to help with some students.

25 I think it's terribly important to get some control

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1 on the proliferation of handguns and assault weapons.
2 We've got to take these deadly weapons out of the hands of
3 our population, because they invariably get in the hands
4 of young men and women as well.

5 I think we ought to try more of these positive
6 approaches, the conflict resolution that we've read about
7 and discussed.

8 The fact that these young people, as Senator Moseley-
9 Braun has said, are able to articulate the situation out
10 there as well as they can indicates that that's really
11 where the answer lies, with the people who are in the
12 audience today, and in the audiences through remote
13 television. We've got to listen hard and respond to them.
14 Thank you.

15 MR. BRUNO: Thank you. We've got some people lined
16 up to ask questions. Let's go back to having the students
17 here in Washington, and also around the country, make
18 their points and comments, as well as ask questions of our
19 very distinguished panel here.

20 I would just like to ask for everybody to keep it
21 just a little bit shorter so that we can get more people
22 to have a chance to do it.

23 First of all, does our panel here in Washington, I
24 haven't given you a chance for a while yet, and then I'll
25 come to the people at the microphone there.

1 Do you have any questions or comments that you would
2 like to make on what we've been talking about? Sally?

3 MS. RIMMER: Yes. I have a comment, that I can
4 understand Representative Moran. I go to T.C. Williams
5 High School, where he said some of his children have gone,
6 and I have seen how close the violence is.

7 A very good friend of mine that I go to school with
8 in T.C. Williams was a victim in a drive-by shooting. She
9 was shot in the hip. Her boyfriend was shot in the chest.
10 This was a very close friend of mine. It scares me.

11 It scares me so bad that his could be happening to
12 me, to my brothers, to my sisters. It's happening in my
13 school, in my neighborhoods.

14 I know that there are things that are being done. I
15 am in a program called City at Peace. You might have
16 heard about it. It's by Creative Response.

17 And like someone said in Chicago, it takes drama, and
18 we had white people, black people, Spanish people, and we
19 all worked together to try to think of solutions to the
20 problems that teens are facing nowadays.

21 MR. HEGENS: Also, some of the impact that the
22 violence has had on me personally was the fact that my mom
23 didn't let me wear jeans until I was 16 or 17 years old.

24 Her reasons for that were because a lot of males,
25 black males, in particular, either had a certain

1 stereotype of what they wore, which were jean, sweat
2 shirts, you know, things like that.

3 And people would say, well, the crime was committed
4 by someone who wore a pair of jeans and a sweat top, then
5 the only thing a person had to say was he had a jeans and
6 a sweat top on, and the police go get this person, and I
7 would be one of the people who would have the jeans and
8 sweat top on, or anyone, you know, being a black male.

9 There was a case not too long ago where that had
10 happened, the police picked up a juvenile with jeans,
11 sweat top, fitting the description a lady gave him, or the
12 police officer.

13 And this was the wrong guy, yet the police officers
14 assaulted this young man, and made him sign a sworn
15 statement saying he was the person who committed that
16 crime.

17 That has had an impact, just because I couldn't wear
18 what I wanted to, until I was old enough to know you have
19 to stay away from this, you have to stay out of this
20 setting, walk away from danger, and things like that,
21 which is sad, you know, to some people, because I could
22 comprehend that now at this age, but at that age I
23 couldn't, and I thought I was being -- I felt that this
24 was something being put against me.

25 MR. BRUNO: Any comment at all from our panel? We'll

1 go to this gentleman at the microphone next.

2 CONGRESSMAN BECERRA: If I can just say, I think
3 Thomas has struck the right chord there. You presented
4 exactly what people who live in communities that are
5 fearing violence have to go through every day, in ways
6 that some of us in Congress never see.

7 And until we recognize that there is a day-to-day,
8 hour-by-hour life-threatening situation that some people
9 will face.

10 And it affects all sorts of things, from the way you
11 eat, to the way you dress, we're never going to be able to
12 deal with it at a national level with policy.

13 We have to be able to hear from people like you,
14 Thomas, all the time. And we have to be willing to elect
15 the representatives to go out into the community to hear
16 more from you like what you've just said.

17 AUDIENCE: I have a sixteen-year-old son as well.
18 And several years ago he received, for Christmas, a down
19 jacket.

20 And the next morning, after he had worn it to school
21 I got a phone call from one of the teachers who suggested
22 that I shouldn't let him wear the down jacket to school
23 because kids were getting beat up, robbed, and one had
24 been shot recently for a similar jacket. It's just that
25 rough, and we have to do something about it.

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1 MR. BRUNO: There is a gentleman patiently standing
2 here at the microphone. Before we go back to Chicago and
3 Los Angeles, I have got to give him a chance to make his
4 comments or ask his question.

5 MS. HANNA: Yes. I would like to make a comment
6 about gun control. Earlier, Mrs. Reno said that before
7 they can give someone a license to carry a gun they make
8 sure that that person knows how to use a gun and when to
9 use it.

10 And I just think that if you are giving someone a
11 license to carry a gun, you are basically giving them a
12 license to kill. I think it is very unfair to society to
13 give someone the priority to carry a gun with them, freely
14 and legally, when they will have the opportunity to kill
15 someone. I believe guns are made to kill, not to defend.

16 MR. BRUNO: Thank you. Are there any comments from
17 my panel here?

18 Okay. We will get to you, but I have got to go back
19 to the other cities and give them a chance.

20 Also, I would like to throw out this idea. We're
21 talking about the question of safety in the streets and in
22 your schools.

23 All of you know who the criminals in your schools
24 are. You know who the dangerous people are. And
25 literally, many of them seem to be getting away with

1 murder.

2 I'd like to get your reaction to the idea that --
3 doesn't there have to be a greater punch, more emphasis on
4 law enforcement to take these people out from the middle
5 of your school, the people who pose a danger to you? Do
6 you want to seem them taken out? And only the police and
7 the criminal justice system can do it.

8 Where should we go to on this? Do you want to go to
9 Chicago next? Okay. We'll go to Chicago.

10 MS. WASHINGTON: Excuse me. I have something to say.
11 On the school -- I recently graduated from high school.
12 And just about everybody knew, more or less, who was
13 causing the trouble, the crime, or robbing people.

14 I would like to say that there was a -- two girls
15 -- two incidents in my school that -- it was attempted
16 rape. And in both incidences the girls were calling for
17 help.

18 And everybody was around, and nobody would help.
19 Nobody would really help her. And everybody saw her
20 screaming. One of the boys got caught, but the other one
21 didn't. And he is still wandering around the school.

22 That's the kind of thing that violence does. It
23 makes the victim afraid. And it also makes the person who
24 sees it -- I thought it was really wrong for that to
25 happen. And no one would even help her.

1 And I'd also like to say that in school, in any
2 school, when you do something wrong, just because you are
3 in school the punishment is lessened than if you were
4 outside.

5 Youngsters -- youth my age, 17 and older, they smack
6 somebody or punch somebody and then, all of a sudden, they
7 might get three days suspension. They go out into the
8 real world thinking they can do that.

9 And you will get killed if you have the audacity to
10 just come up to somebody and smack someone. You cannot do
11 the things that they get away with in school. If you
12 tried to do that out in the street or anywhere you can get
13 in jail.

14 And I think that the rules should be much more
15 stricter in school, because you get off in school. You
16 get off from crime and incidents of fighting much more
17 easier than it would happen in the street. If it happened
18 outside, you would be thrown in jail and would have to go
19 through court and everything like that. In school --

20 MR. BRUNO: Could we have --

21 MS. WASHINGTON: Excuse me?

22 MR. BRUNO: Could we get the Senator to comment on
23 what you have been saying? Okay.

24 Senator -- do you want to go ahead, Senator Braun?

25 SENATOR MOSELEY-BRAUN: I think she -- again, I

1 continue to be impressed by the astuteness of these young
2 people. The notion that crime makes cowards out of good
3 people, that it stops good people from reaching out to
4 help, is very important.

5 Her specific proposal about beefing up security in
6 the schools is a very important one. But I fear, to be
7 honest -- and that is something that Senator Kohl and I, I
8 think, are going to look at when we do our juvenile
9 justice hearings.

10 It's not fair to teachers to make them guardians and
11 police officers and all of that when they can't spend time
12 actually giving instruction in education.

13 And so, if anything, I think we have to beef up --
14 I'm not disagreeing with you. I think you're right. I
15 mean, the situation in the schools is worse.

16 And young people, a lot of young people don't realize
17 that the things they get away with as teenagers will land
18 them in a coffin, an early grave, out in the real world,
19 as you put it.

20 But I think we have to find some ways to address
21 those issues within the schools without having to take
22 away from instructional activities, from the opportunities
23 the teachers have actually to teach. It's not fair to
24 them. And that's what's been going on. We have been
25 dumping on the teachers too long.

1 MR. BRUNO: Do any of our panelists care to comment
2 on that?

3 SENATOR KOHL: Yes. I will make a comment. First,
4 I'd like to say hello to one of the panelists in Chicago,
5 from Milwaukee, Quincy Farr.

6 But I also want to make this point, as I think it is
7 very relevant, and I think it is a fact: Other segments
8 in our population demand what they feel they deserve. Our
9 elderly people demand health care. And we provide it to
10 them, for the most part, in this country.

11 Elderly people demand a level of security,
12 financially, in their old age. And we have, over the
13 years, provided that.

14 Other people in our society demand things like
15 minimum wage and health and environmental and safety
16 protection on the job. And we certainly respond to that
17 to the best, you know, to the best we can, but there is
18 clearly a response to that demand.

19 Young people in our society are demanding at least
20 two basic things: Minimum safety as they walk down the
21 street and go to school, and a chance to learn when they
22 go to school.

23 And I think, by any measurement, we are not
24 responding to that demand that they have put upon us. And
25 it is a minimum-type demand. And we are not responding.

1 And it says something about people, I think, in
2 levels of public responsibility that we decide to allocate
3 resources to people who are in a position to vote and, as
4 I said, again, to contribute to campaigns.

5 And until we turn that around, I think young people
6 will see this, to a large extent, as rhetoric, you know,
7 as speech-making and not really responding to your real
8 needs.

9 So, you know, if you are unhappy with the response
10 that you receive from officialdom in our society, I can
11 understand that. And I think that I sympathize with that.
12 There comes a time when, you know, speech-making needs to
13 stop and we need to be able to respond to your real needs
14 more effectively than we are responding right now.

15 MR. BRUNO: Okay. The Senator acknowledged that
16 Quincy Farr from Milwaukee is there.

17 As long as the camera is on him and he's sitting
18 there -- Quincy, do you have anything that you'd like to
19 say to the Senator, or a comment or a question?

20 QUINCY: Well, I thank him for acknowledging me. In
21 Milwaukee we have lots of problems. You know, you can't
22 walk down the street with your hat on. You can't walk
23 down the street with certain clothes on, or you always get
24 robbed.

25 Just like me -- I have a new pair of shoes called

1 L.A. Tech. I walked down the street a couple of days ago
2 and some bully tried to take them, because they were
3 lighting up at night.

4 You know, I had to run. I had to run for my life,
5 because there was more than one of us and more than one of
6 them. All of them had guns.

7 You know, the gun law is very wrong. They shouldn't
8 have guns on the street. It's just like they said
9 earlier. It isn't us bringing the guns to the community;
10 it's other people.

11 Just like the drugs: We have four or five drug
12 houses on my block. And the police aren't doing nothing
13 about it.

14 MR. BRUNO: That's a vivid description of the way it
15 is not only in Milwaukee, but in cities, as I say, all
16 across the country.

17 SENATOR KOHL: Can I ask Quincy a question?

18 MR. BRUNO: Sure. Go ahead.

19 SENATOR KOHL: Quincy, these kids who have guns --
20 for the most part, how do they get these guns? Where do
21 they get them?

22 QUINCY: They buy them from older kids. Older, like
23 people in their late -- people from the age of 20 and 25.
24 You know, they just come around. And whoever has the
25 money and wants to buy a gun, they buy it.

1 SENATOR KOHL: What do these guns cost?

2 QUINCY: From anywhere -- from \$100 to \$200, or \$50
3 to \$100.

4 SENATOR KOHL: They just buy them walking down the
5 street.

6 QUINCY: Or people who are driving up in cars.

7 SARAH: Can I ask Senator Braun a question real
8 quick?

9 MR. BRUNO: Where is that, Los Angeles?

10 SARAH: No. Chicago.

11 MR. BRUNO: Okay. Go ahead.

12 SARAH: I just want to ask her -- about that bill
13 that you are working on to strengthen rape sentences, what
14 is going on with that? Because I really think we need to
15 change people's attitudes, and by passing that bill -- I
16 think it would really help it.

17 If you are going to rape someone, it's going to be
18 -- you know, you're going to be punished. You're not just
19 going to be sent there for a couple of months,

20 MR. BRUNO: We've got a bad microphone there. It
21 came in kind of broken up. The question to Senator Braun,
22 Moseley-Braun, is the status of her bill on -- what was
23 it, tougher punishments for --

24 SENATOR MOSELEY-BRAUN: I think Sarah is referring to
25 the violence against women legislation. And in fact,

1 Senator Biden is right now in the Judiciary Committee
2 discussing this legislation. It is pending. It has come
3 out of committee and I suspect we will have a vote on it.

4 Right, Senator Kohl?

5 We should have a vote on the violence against women
6 before too long. And this legislation covers violence
7 against women on a lot of different levels and provides
8 assistance in terms of counseling.

9 But it also toughens penalties and makes it real
10 clear to law enforcement, both the police and the judges,
11 that violence against women is still violence and that you
12 can't treat it less seriously than other violent crimes.
13 So we are very optimistic about having the support for
14 that bill this year.

15 MR. BRUNO: I have been told to go to Los Angeles,
16 but I've just got to disobey orders one time. There has
17 been a lady here in Washington, patiently standing at the
18 microphone. At least Los Angeles is seated. And we will
19 get to you in just a minute.

20 Let's give this lady a chance to make her comments or
21 ask her questions from here in Washington.

22 Go ahead, please. State your name and go ahead.

23 MS. SHEPARD: Good morning. My name is Zeros
24 Shepard. I am a student at Eastern Senior High School.
25 And also, I am in the pre-law program there.

1 Recently, I just read an interview that was done by
2 the ABA, and they was talking with Janet Reno. And she
3 said it was better to instill while they was young when,
4 unless -- other than rehabilitating a 16-year-old.

5 My question to you, Senator Kohl: What happens to a
6 16-year-old who has been in and out of jail and reading on
7 a third grade level?

8 SENATOR KOHL: What happens to 16-year-olds who are
9 in and out of jail and reading on a third grade level?
10 Those people have a rough time ahead.

11 If kids go to school and don't learn, and by the time
12 they are 16 they have already been in trouble with the law
13 and don't have an ability to read, then society has failed
14 them. And they are looking at a very, very difficult
15 future.

16 By the time that they are that age, we have lost
17 them, in many cases. And what we need to do is
18 concentrate on kids when they are in the first grade, in
19 kindergarten, in second grade and third grade to see to it
20 that they, (a) begin to learn -- and it is society's
21 responsibility as well as they and their family's
22 responsibility to see to it that they begin to learn and
23 learn effectively and stay out of trouble.

24 It's a two-way street. They can't do it without help
25 from others, and we can't do it without cooperation from

1 them. But when they get to be 16, if they've already been
2 in and out of trouble, in and out of jail, and can't read
3 on a third grade level, you all know we're talking about a
4 very, very difficult problem.

5 By that time many of them are lost. And so what we
6 have to do is see to it that they reach these people,
7 collectively reach these people, working together when
8 they are growing up, in their formative years.

9 MR. BRUNO: Congressman Moran, or Congressman
10 Becerra, is there any comment, or Senator Moseley? We
11 can't hear. That mike is not live.

12 While that mike is getting live, why don't we give
13 the Congressman a chance to talk, then we'll come back to
14 you for your comment.

15 Go ahead. Congressman Moran, do you want to go
16 ahead? We'll come right back to this group.

17 MR. MORAN: There is hope, but it's going to take an
18 enormous amount of discipline for that young person --
19 normally, it's going to be a young man -- if he's been in
20 and out of jail by the time he's 16.

21 And if he has only a third grade education, he's not
22 going to be able to get a decent job, or to provide for a
23 family, or really do anything other than continue that
24 kind of lifestyle, unless -- it takes a tremendous amount
25 of discipline and he has some peers that are supportive

1 and some people that care about him that are going to make
2 some investment with him.

3 The only people that I have seen from that background
4 are those who went in prison, chose to take advantage of
5 the education that was available for them, and educated
6 themselves when they were in prison.

7 I don't know what young people do with that kind of a
8 background today. And all I can suggest is: Don't let it
9 happen to you.

10 And if you know somebody that has gotten through
11 that, has been in jail more than once by the time they are
12 16 and doesn't have an adequate education, you've got to
13 reach out. Try to help them in whatever way you can.
14 There are no easy answers.

15 SENATOR KOHL: I'm sorry. I want to make this a --
16 you're right, Farouk. I was probably much too one-sided
17 in my description. There is always hope.

18 And we always need to work with people and try and
19 help them to rehabilitate their lives. If that's your
20 point, I certainly do agree with you.

21 TOLANI: I would like to --

22 SENATOR MOSELEY-BRAUN: If I can -- if I may -- I'm
23 sorry, Tolani.

24 TOLANI: Well, I'd like to make the comment that we
25 have to look at what happened to that young man when he

1 was in the third grade and his education stopped.

2 Was he considered gifted and talented at that time?
3 Was he given the highest level of education that would
4 challenge his imagination and his intellect?

5 The reason why he stopped learning at third grade was
6 because the education system wasn't receptive to --
7 stopped being receptive of him and stopped challenging
8 him.

9 And we have to look at that. He didn't just jump
10 from third grade to 16. Something happened in between.
11 He was lost somewhere along the way in our education
12 system.

13 SENATOR MOSELEY-BRAUN: I don't disagree. I
14 absolutely agree with you. And that was very eloquently
15 stated.

16 But following up with Senator Kohl's responsibility,
17 in talking about challenges, if anything, I think Senator
18 Kohl is talking about the challenge to young people, that
19 you have to be responsible also.

20 Government has a responsibility to listen to your
21 demands. And that's his language. He's talking about:
22 You have to demand and the government responds.

23 In a democracy -- in a democracy, it's true. The
24 government responds to those who demand. And so, if
25 anything, one of the reasons that the concerns of young

1 people have been left out is because they have been
2 voiceless.

3 And so we will do everything we can from this end to
4 make it happen, to give voice to these concerns, to give
5 voice to the concern about violence and educational needs
6 and the like.

7 But it is going to take some giving and some
8 responsibility on the other side too, where young people
9 will be responsible not just for themselves, but -- the
10 young lady was talking about in schools -- responsible for
11 your neighbor.

12 If you see somebody being beat up or being raped in
13 school -- you know, to walk away from it is just to
14 encourage it to happen to you next.

15 If you know somebody who has got a whole cache of
16 weapons in his basement, then just to keep -- not to say
17 anything about it means you may be one of the people to be
18 shot with that; or if you know about somebody who is
19 getting their jacket ripped off, you know, you have to
20 take some responsibility for what happens in your
21 community.

22 Now, there was a gang peace, a gang truce, going on
23 across this country recently. And I'm being told now that
24 the truce is beginning to fall apart. Well, that's really
25 sad, because, if anything, the notion that the gangs

1 themselves will say it's time to call a truce and stop
2 killing each other is a glimmer of hope that they really
3 will begin to take some responsibility for themselves, for
4 their community, and for their future.

5 That's the way that -- it's going to take both sides
6 of this equation to get out of this mess that we're in.

7 MR. BRUNO: Thank you. Let's go to Los Angeles.
8 We've been delaying getting to them. I apologize for
9 that, because there has been so much going on here at the
10 moment.

11 Los Angeles. Congressman Becerra is from California,
12 from your area. Let's start out -- again, any thoughts
13 you might have. What do we do about the criminals among
14 you, the people who are preying upon you?

15 MR. WILLIAMS: Well, I feel that we should -- don't
16 throw them aside, because we've been doing that for too
17 long now. And it's like that's the reason why they are
18 the way they are.

19 And we're asking questions, "Why are you like this?
20 Why are you doing this?" because we don't care about them.
21 It's like, if you don't fit society's standards, society
22 throws you away.

23 You become a bum, or you become somebody without no
24 hope. And if people don't believe in you, how are you
25 going to believe in yourself? If people are not there to

1 motivate you, how are you going to motivate yourself if
2 you don't have the tools to motivate yourself?

3 What if you are not a person that has high self-
4 esteem? And it's like, how can we be responsible if our
5 parents are not responsible? How can we, you know, take
6 on adult actions when we don't know how to be adults?

7 It's like nobody wants to hear us unless we're doing
8 negative. And I feel, for me, being a black, African
9 male, it's like I was taught at a young age -- and this is
10 all African-American males -- that positive is negative
11 and negative is positive.

12 We are taught to play sports and, you know, school
13 will come later. We are taught, you know, to dominate the
14 sports world. But what about school?

15 It's like, it has to be a balance in between. If
16 you're a great sports player, they'll let you slide in
17 school. That still goes on. And it's like, what if you
18 don't know how to play sports and you try to dominate the
19 curricular activity? It's like you're not accepted by
20 your peers.

21 And for a teenager or for a person that's not of age
22 to be an adult, it's like -- I mean, your peers are your
23 most critical people. You try to do anything to be
24 accepted by them.

25 And it's like, you know, when is that going to stop?

1 When are we, as young adults, going to have some say? You
2 tell us that we don't become adults until we're 21, but we
3 can drive when we're 16.

4 And we can -- what is it, 18 -- at 18 where it's
5 legalized, or something like that. I mean, can we set a
6 set standard where we're adults?

7 It's like you tell us that we are one minute and then
8 the next minute, when it comes to talking, we're kids. We
9 don't know what we're talking about. We're too young to
10 be wise, or we're too young to have so much knowledge.

11 MR. BRUNO: Is there something wrong with the peers,
12 though, that they accept -- willingly accept the athlete
13 and look and admire and respect, but not the student?

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Because that's the way you're
15 portrayed on TV; like Michael Jordan. Everybody wants to
16 be Michael Jordan, but everybody can't be Michael Jordan.
17 The reason being, we don't have tangible role models.

18 That's the whole basic thing, tangible role models.
19 We see, like a Herschel Walker or something, we want to be
20 him. That's what we look up to. But what about -- we
21 don't -- they don't glamorize education. It's like
22 education is secondary. If you're playing sports, you're
23 on top of the world.

24 MR. BECERRA: I think the point that is being raised
25 there is the issue of responsibility. How much

1 responsibility should we be giving our youth, and how much
2 responsibility can they reasonably accept?

3 I believe you're finding that, these days, more and
4 more responsibility can be given to our youth. Let them
5 make some of the decisions. Let them help us make our
6 decisions.

7 And what we have found -- for example, on the
8 question of violence in schools, what do students think is
9 the best remedy for that? How do we believe that they can
10 best stop it?

11 They know who the folks are that are committing the
12 crimes. They know the folks that are packing the guns.
13 How can we stop that from happening? Find it first
14 locally, right there, internally. See what the answer is
15 and ask those students to help us find the answers to
16 those questions.

17 MR. BRUNO: Okay. Somebody else in Los Angeles.

18 AMINA: Yes. I do have a comment to make on that.
19 Following along those same lines, I think when you say
20 "Where is it coming from? How can we find solutions?" we
21 have to look, actually, at the families.

22 These same students that come to school with guns
23 leave some home. They lead some lifestyle. And so I
24 don't think we spend -- we don't invest enough in our
25 families.

1 When I have a parent that works 14 hours a day, but
2 isn't home even to know what I'm doing with my life, then
3 there's a problem. There is a problem when, from the
4 beginning, we're starting at a disadvantage because we
5 don't have our parents there.

6 We don't have a support system. I think the
7 important thing to look at is the support system that we
8 need to function in those formative years, from zero to
9 three. They're not there.

10 And so I think we have a problem when you say to the
11 students, "No, you're not doing this. You're not doing
12 that."

13 But then you're not looking at our families. You're
14 not looking at: Who is it that's influencing our
15 decisions? Who is it that's sending us to school each
16 day?

17 And also, on that same note, when you say when you
18 have schools -- that students are doing wrong, and you're
19 saying, "Well, why don't you turn them in or something?" I
20 think you have to -- many times something is done about
21 the students.

22 But what is done is not the right thing. They're
23 sent to another school. They're sent to my school.
24 They're sent to your school.

25 And so you pass these students that are doing "bad"

1 -- you pass them from school to school without actually
2 solving the problem by giving them some sort of
3 rehabilitation, giving them -- finding out what the reason
4 is.

5 There is a reason for this. You don't just commit
6 violence or do something wrong on your campus because of
7 nothing at all. I think you need to actually look at the
8 problem. Look at what is causing these students to be the
9 way they are.

10 MR. BRUNO: Let me ask you a practical question. How
11 much is the danger to you if you do turn them it?

12 AMINA: I think there is some sort of -- there is, to
13 an extent, a danger. But also, I've seen students turned
14 in. I've seen students that -- this is how the
15 teachers -- the students are on campus.

16 They know that there is a problem with these
17 students. There are teachers on campus. And something is
18 done. Yes. They do kick them out or they do put them in
19 detention or do something like that.

20 But they don't actually do rehabilitation. They
21 don't counsel them. They don't find out what the problem
22 is. Because there is a reason for it, from the family,
23 from the school. Something is wrong, obviously.

24 MR. BRUNO: Now --

25 MS. VILLAREAL: There is another issue --

1 MR. BECERRA: If I could ask a question of the
2 students, Los Angeles Unified School District just
3 recently instituted a policy which said that if a student
4 were found on school grounds with a gun, that student
5 would be automatically expelled.

6 I'm wondering what the students feel about that
7 particular policy, if they support it or would rather see
8 something else done.

9 MS. VILLAREAL: I think that's a beginning, but I
10 don't

11 -- I think it's a band-aid for the problem. How are they
12 getting these guns? Who is allowing them to go to school
13 with a gun? Who is the parent at home who has a student
14 -- that has a child that's going to school with a gun?

15 You can't just put a band-aid on the solution,
16 because once you walk outside that gate there's still that
17 same child with that same gun. And so there's a problem.

18 AUDIENCE: There is another issue about family that
19 hasn't been discussed, and it's a pretty touchy subject.
20 I personally grew up with the violence. Not on a day-to-
21 day basis like everyone has said, but I didn't see it
22 first on the street.

23 I saw it at first in my home. A lot of us do come
24 from battered -- abusive families. I saw my father batter
25 my mother and put her in the hospital.

1 And that's an issue that needs to be discussed,
2 because it's not taken very seriously when a woman says,
3 "My husband just abused me."

4 Many of the men say -- or I've heard many men say,
5 "Well, you must have deserved it. You must have done
6 something to anger your husband."

7 And it's not taken seriously in the legal system.
8 What kind of issue is that when you also have children who
9 are being abused? I come from -- I was abused myself.
10 And when you have it in your home, it starts from there
11 and it goes on into school.

12 A lot of us come from families where if we are not
13 physically abused, we are mentally abused. And that hurts
14 our self-esteem.

15 And when we don't even have parents home who -- you
16 know, who are working, and don't even give us any time of
17 day, except to yell at us and get frustrated with us
18 because they are stressed from work or stressed because
19 they can't pay the bills, and they take it out on us
20 physically.

21 And the legal system doesn't take up issue with that,
22 that -- they aren't -- they are afraid to intervene,
23 because it's the family unit, when it's society, when it's
24 hurting other people in general.

25 SENATOR MOSELEY-BRAUN: Can I interject one second?

1 You know, the fact is, it's the old -- there's an
2 expression, when the world gives you lemons, you try to
3 make lemonade out of it.

4 I was an abused child myself. And the question is
5 not just the fact of the abuse, but what you do in
6 response to it.

7 Do you turn on others as a result of that abuse, or
8 do you turn that energy, and sometimes even the rage and
9 the anger, into something positive, positive for yourself?
10 And so, while -- you are right.

11 We are trying to relate to the abuse issue with the
12 domestic violence legislation, with the legislative
13 efforts that are coming through the Congress. We're going
14 to try to do something to raise consciousness about this
15 issue.

16 And I think it is important, what you have just said,
17 but the real bottom line is what you do in response to
18 that abuse. Do you use that to go out and terrorize and
19 make somebody else's life miserable, or your own?

20 Do you lose your self-esteem and just go into a hole,
21 or do you say, "Wait a minute. I've got something
22 important to offer to this world, and I can do it"?

23 And that's the key. If you believe in yourself, and
24 you believe -- and you have the courage to go and do what
25 you can do, then you can make a difference. And you can

1 come through it.

2 MR. BRUNO: We haven't heard from Douglas in Los
3 Angeles. He hasn't had a chance to talk yet.

4 Douglas, are you there, and do you have a comment?

5 And then we'll come to one question here in
6 Washington.

7 DOUGLAS: Something I want to say is that it is kind
8 of obvious that sometimes these people act this way
9 because all they want is attention.

10 So if that's the case, why shouldn't society give
11 attention to someone before they commit a crime, before
12 they go out and have a drive-by shooting, before they rape
13 a woman, or before they kill someone?

14 Because it seems to me, like, they are the ones who
15 get the most attention all over the place, all the time;
16 people who are doing bad things. You don't get to see,
17 too often, good people doing something for the community
18 on TV.

19 You don't see someone, like, cleaning up the street,
20 you know, getting promoted on the media or something like
21 that.

22 All you see all the time is, "Oh, there were like
23 five killed in a drive-by shooting down the street in
24 whatever city."

25 Or like, this rape -- has raped five prostitutes in

1 South Central L.A., or something like that. That's --
2 it's only instigating more violence and more events like
3 that.

4 Another thing is that these people don't have nothing
5 to do in their afternoons, in their free time. California
6 seems to have a great big, big problem with money.

7 Schools are being threatened. Libraries are being
8 closed left and right. And who cares? No one, except us.
9 But what can we do about it? Just sit here and talk about
10 it when -- is this actually going to do something? You
11 know, there is -- it's about time now for some change
12 here.

13 MR. BRUNO: Congressman Becerra, you wanted to make a
14 comment there.

15 MR. BECERRA: I think Douglas raises the proverbial
16 pay-me-now-pay-me-later syndrome. We either pay now, or
17 we're going to find we're going to be paying a lot more
18 later on.

19 And we don't see that it costs us \$33,000 to keep a
20 youth locked up in school (sic). And yet we're talking
21 about cutting back on the \$4,000 or so dollars we spend in
22 California for a youth to stay in school. It makes no
23 sense.

24 We have to start investing in those gang diversion,
25 drug diversion programs, the drop-out prevention programs

1 now, because it will cost us much more than just the crime
2 committed by that youth. It will be much more later on.

3 MR. BRUNO: We've got to go to Chicago. We're just
4 about out of time here. We want to give them a final
5 chance to make a comment.

6 There is somebody at the podium there. Do you want
7 to go ahead in Chicago, please?

8 AUDIENCE: Yes. Thank you. I just wanted to share
9 my point of view on what we were discussing earlier, about
10 our personal safety and how our lives have had to change
11 because of crime and so forth.

12 I've grown up in a suburb of Chicago where we've
13 never really had cause to be afraid, you know, to sit in
14 our yards or to play in the front yards or whatever, but
15 in the fall I will be going away to college in a large
16 city.

17 And at this university safety has become a major
18 concern in the past few years. And they have done such
19 things as installing call boxes where, if you are in
20 danger, all you have to do is hit a button and they know
21 where you are, and passing out whistles to all the women
22 on campus to blow if they are in trouble.

23 And they have established a service called Night
24 Rides where they have a van that will pick you up if you
25 need a ride back to your dorm room.

1 But the problem has become so bad that if you and
2 your friend are studying at the library together, they
3 cannot pick both of you up at the same time. They have to
4 pick one of you up, take you back, and come back for the
5 other person -- at least that's what I was told at my
6 orientation recently -- because if you have two people in
7 the van, they could overtake the driver.

8 MR. BRUNO: I think the --

9 AUDIENCE: That's how bad it's become. And I'm just
10 wondering when it's going to stop and where we can draw
11 the line.

12 MR. BRUNO: I think the point you're making is that
13 even once you get out of high school, you get out of your
14 own community, it doesn't go away. The problem is there.

15 I think it goes back to what we said, that this
16 problem exists everywhere. It is not just one city. It
17 is not one type of city. It is not just one neighborhood.

18 Now, I'd like to give the members of our panel --
19 we're just about out of time. I'd like to give each of
20 them an opportunity to just make a short comment. And
21 then I want to thank everybody. But first of all, let's
22 have just a short wrap-up comment from each person on our
23 panel.

24 I apologize to the people in Washington who didn't
25 get a chance to ask a question and have been standing

1 patiently.

2 Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, would you have a final
3 thought for us please?

4 SENATOR MOSELEY-BRAUN: Just briefly. To the young
5 person who said, is talking about: Is it going to make a
6 difference? Yes. Talking about it will make a difference
7 and will help us to get motivated and to have the will to
8 do something about it.

9 You'd be surprised at the people who don't have a
10 clue about any of the things you've been talking about.
11 You'd be surprised. And the more we talk about it, the
12 more they will understand what the needs are and the more
13 we can come together to do something real and to fix those
14 problems.

15 MR. BRUNO: Senator Kohl.

16 SENATOR KOHL: Yes. Thank you.

17 Well, I would offer this reassurance, I think, that
18 needs to be made: I think there is a recognition now,
19 throughout our country, that the problems of young people
20 growing up in our society are our most serious problems.

21 And we're not -- I hope and I believe we are not
22 prepared to sweep it under the rug any longer and to try
23 and develop a response that really meets your needs here
24 today and all across our country.

25 There is a recognition that if we don't do a much,

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1 much better job with our young people, then our future is
2 going to be lost. And I think we are prepared to get down
3 to work and really address the problems that you are
4 addressing this morning, and address them seriously and
5 successfully. So there is a lot of hope.

6 MR. BRUNO: Congressman Becerra.

7 MR. BECERRA: Again, also on the issue of hope, there
8 is hope. Not only is there, there must be hope, because
9 for that 17-year-old -- in a decade more, that person will
10 have under his belt more experiences that we will not want
11 to see.

12 So there must be hope for that person. And what we
13 have to find is that we all must do a better job of
14 communicating to the public and to policy makers the need
15 for us to prevent crime, not to remediate it.

16 MR. BRUNO: Congressman Moran.

17 MR. MORAN: Yes. We've heard some wonderfully
18 articulated perspectives on what the problem is. But, you
19 know, you can blame it on the schools, or you can blame it
20 on society, or discrimination, or whatever you want to
21 blame it on, and it really doesn't get you anywhere.

22 There is only one person who is going to start to
23 make the difference that is needed. And you look at that
24 person in the mirror every day. They are the only ones
25 who can be held accountable for the way that your life

1 turns out.

2 And if you want good role models, you've got to be
3 the good role model for others. You've got to take the
4 initiative. And it's really up to -- most of the people
5 in here were chosen because they are leaders within their
6 schools and within their communities and they are looked
7 up to by their friends.

8 And each one of you are responsible for whether
9 things change from the way they are today and get better
10 or worse.

11 MR. BRUNO: Thank you. I'd like to thank our panel
12 for being with us, Attorney General Reno, who is with us.

13 I'd like to thank the members of our panels in
14 Washington, Los Angeles, and Chicago for the thoughts that
15 they expressed, that they did so well, and the ideas that
16 they put forth today. We have all learned something.

17 And again, I'd like to apologize to those here in
18 Washington who were standing at the mike and I didn't get
19 to you. I sincerely do apologize for that. We just
20 simply got tight on time.

21 Again, thanks to all who were involved in this
22 wonderful project.

23 And now I'd like to turn it back over the Lee
24 Arbiton.

25 MR. ARBITON: Thank you, Hal.

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1 Our thanks once again to the attorney general, who
2 was certainly inspiring today, and to members of Congress,
3 to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency
4 Prevention in the Department of Justice. That's the part
5 of the government that sponsors this event, sponsors this
6 program.

7 And, of course, our thanks again to Ameritech and to
8 Pacific Bell.

9 Before we close, I'd like to read to all of us this
10 letter from the President:

11 "Greetings to all gathered in Washington, D.C., for
12 the seventh annual Law-Related Education Conference. As
13 the focus of your conference aptly recognizes, America's
14 young people are struggling to deal with unprecedented
15 levels of violence in their lives, in their homes, their
16 schools, and in their communities.

17 Every school day, over 150,000 students are skipping
18 classes, partly because they fear physical harm.
19 Throughout the nation, 97 percent of school administrators
20 report an increase in violence among young people during
21 the past five years.

22 In the face of such daunting circumstances, your
23 efforts in law-related education are helping to empower
24 our youth with a working knowledge of law that affects
25 them in their daily lives.

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1 Through programs that help teachers and
2 administrators bring real world lessons into the
3 classroom, students can begin to understand how to live
4 secure, productive lives within the boundaries of the law.

5 As you inaugurate this important conference, I
6 commend you for your innovative work in juvenile justice
7 and extend my best wishes for your continued success."

8 And it is signed, "Bill Clinton."

9 We will now end this portion of the program. We want
10 to say good-bye to Los Angeles, and to Chicago, and
11 especially to the student panelist in both of those
12 cities.

13 Here in Washington, we will continue with the town
14 meeting after taking a five-minute break.

15 (Thereupon, a short break was taken,
16 after which the following proceedings
17 were had:)

18 MR. ADAMS: Good morning. I'm Rich Adams.

19 And welcome to the final hour of our video town
20 meeting on violence in America.

21 Now, over the last two hours we have heard some
22 interesting and challenging, and actually some sobering
23 views about violence, particularly as it affects young
24 people all over our country.

25 We want to thank Ameritech for providing the

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1 technology to allow young people in Chicago and Los
2 Angeles to join us in the first portion of the
3 presentation.

4 But now we're going to stay right here on Capitol
5 Hill, here in Washington, D.C., and take a look at your
6 ideas on a critical aspect of violence and youth, and that
7 is violence in one of the most important places in a young
8 person's life, violence in the schools.

9 We have invited four people to share their views with
10 us, and let's meet them now.

11 First is Dr. Shirley McBay. Dr. McBay is President
12 of Quality Education for Minorities Network, Inc. She
13 holds a doctorate in mathematics from the University of
14 Georgia and has served ten years as dean for student
15 affairs at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She
16 has been active in national programs aimed at increasing
17 the participation of minority students in science and
18 engineering.

19 Our next guest is Todd Clark. Mr. Clark is executive
20 director of the Constitutional Rights Foundation. Mr.
21 Clark has been a leader in law-related education and the
22 development of community service as a pre-college learning
23 activity.

24 Mr. Clark is past president of the National Council
25 for the Social Studies, and he has also held a number of

1 leadership positions in education in California. Welcome,
2 Mr. Clark.

3 Our next guest is Dr. Michael Casserly. Dr. Casserly
4 is executive director of the Council of the Great City
5 Schools. That is the only national organization that
6 exclusively represents large, urban public school
7 districts.

8 Dr. Casserly earned his doctorate at the University
9 of Maryland. He is the author of numerous reports and
10 articles on urban education, as well as the author of a
11 book on school vandalism.

12 And our final guest is Mrs. Sandra Sabino Chinn. She
13 is human relations supervisor with the Prince George's
14 County, Maryland Public Schools. Ms. Chinn and her staff
15 help students in the critical areas of crisis management,
16 violence prevention, and conflict resolution.

17 And of course, all of you out here are part of our
18 program for this hour. We are going to hear from all of
19 our students here in the Washington, D.C. area who have
20 joined us here on Capitol Hill today, and we welcome your
21 input.

22 As Attorney General Reno said earlier, we want to
23 learn from you. Let's start by just asking our panel
24 members to speak very briefly. And let me start with Dr.
25 Casserly.

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1 Dr. Casserly, how bad is violence in our schools
2 today?

3 DR. CASSERLY: Well, I think you have to put the
4 violence into a little bit of perspective. There is a
5 great deal of perception, and stereotype actually, about
6 urban schools being a haven for violence when, in fact,
7 schools in the cities and elsewhere continue to be a haven
8 from violence in the larger community.

9 It is a little bit unclear to me, to tell you the
10 truth, whether or not violence is increasing or decreasing
11 in school buildings. It is clear, however, that kids
12 remain safer in schools than almost any other place in
13 society.

14 But let me also indicate that this is a problem not
15 of kids, of our youth; it is a problem of us as adults.
16 It is adults who manufacture and distribute weapons. It
17 is the adults who produce the violence on TV and in the
18 movies and it is adults who often resolve their own
19 frustrations with the young by being violent towards them.

20 I'm not naive about how violent kids and/or youth can
21 be, but our violence as a nation is a problem of adults,
22 not a problem of children.

23 MR. ADAMS: Okay. Thank you. Go ahead. Please feel
24 free to respond. All right.

25 Now, Ms. Chinn, a question for you. Your school

1 district, Prince George's County, Maryland, for our
2 viewers from outside the Washington area, is one of the
3 largest in the country and it's right on the eastern edge
4 of Washington, D.C., in a county that has both rural and
5 urban areas.

6 A lot of people say school violence in the suburbs is
7 a spill over from the inner city, but is it really?

8 MS. CHINN: Most definitely. Homicides, suicides,
9 extortions, sex offenses, burglaries, whatever is going on
10 out there, it's happening in Prince George's County.
11 Maybe to not as great an extent, but it is happening. And
12 we are trying to deal with it.

13 And I have to thank all the young people out here,
14 because I look at you and I see our future in the 21st
15 Century.

16 But I need to take this moment to recognize the
17 teachers who are out there. And I would like teachers to
18 just stand up, because this is our world, the world of the
19 teacher and the students. So if there are educators out
20 there in our audience, could you please stand up?

21 And you asked the question, how does it affect us?
22 It affects us, too, with the children. We are seeing
23 teachers leaving the profession. We are seeing teachers
24 burned out.

25 We are seeing teachers afraid to discipline or

1 reluctant to stop someone in the hall for fear of a
2 repercussion later. So it definitely has affected the
3 suburban schools.

4 MR. ADAMS: Thank you. A little later on I would
5 like to hear from some of you who may live in rural areas,
6 or suburban areas, and ask you if, really, all the
7 problems are coming from the city, or whether some of them
8 might not be right there where you live too.

9 Let's move on now to Dr. McBay. What effect -- and
10 you have worked very closely with this through the years
11 in several roles -- what effect is school violence having
12 on minority students particularly?

13 DR. MCBAY: Well, of course school violence is
14 related to issues that disproportionately affect minority
15 students and their families. For example, it is
16 disproportionately found in schools that have large
17 concentrations of minority students.

18 It is disproportionately found in schools where
19 students come from low income families. It is
20 disproportionately found in schools where parents are not
21 as involved in the school activities.

22 So many of the things that minority families, low
23 income minority families in particular, are not able to
24 participate in are some of the reasons that the schools
25 are not being as effective in terms of addressing these

1 issues that kids bring to school with them.

2 MR. ADAMS: All right. Thank you. Good. All right.

3 Now, Mr. Clark. What should our schools be teaching?

4 Is there something else that we should be teaching -- I
5 mean we're asking teachers to do so much already -- that
6 might help cut down on school violence?

7 MR. CLARK: Well, I think, in the first place, it is
8 important to make the point that our schools need to be
9 friendly places for kids.

10 That's a tall order, especially in many urban schools
11 where the school buildings themselves, the size of the
12 student population, the conditions of the buildings, the
13 access that young people have to teachers, who frequently
14 do not live in the neighborhoods of the schools, is
15 limited strictly to the school day.

16 But I think beyond all those issues, which are very,
17 very important ones in terms of the tone and the mood and
18 the attitude and the feeling that young people have when
19 they go to school, there needs to be a great deal of
20 attention given to trying to link the subjects that are
21 vital to know and understand, the so-called basics, with
22 the real world that young people are a part of.

23 This day here in Washington, D.C., which we are
24 devoting to violence, is taking place as a part of a
25 gathering of educators from all over the country who are

1 talking about law-related education.

2 The field of law-related education is a principal
3 curriculum area in which we are attempting to link the
4 classroom and the community, to link principles with
5 practices, to link interactive opportunities for young
6 people in the classroom with interactive opportunities in
7 the community.

8 So I think it is vital that we see instruction,
9 pedagogy, if you will, and the substance of subjects like
10 the law and the legal system as vital ways to give young
11 people an opportunity to take these basic subjects which
12 we think are so important and bridge the classroom with
13 the community.

14 One of the other areas that we give great emphasis
15 to is the involvement of people from the community in the
16 schools.

17 It is very important if you are going to talk about
18 issues like law, which raise questions about fairness and
19 justice and things of that sort, for young people to have
20 a chance to ask questions of people from the community
21 when they talk about those issues in the classroom.

22 So I would say generally it's expanding and extending
23 on the notion of basics. It's giving emphasis to
24 interaction and contact and opportunities to really
25 interrelate with adults. These are really critical

1 combinations that need to be a part of today's education.

2 MR. ADAMS: Well, one of the values of this session
3 today is that we are going to hear from the people who
4 actually are the recipients of this education.

5 These ladies and gentlemen here on the panel
6 represent people who develop the policies, the things that
7 make your schools work. Let's hear what you think about
8 what is working and what is not.

9 Sir, please. Go ahead.

10 MR. SAMPSON: My name is Steadman Sampson, and
11 ironically I'm not from, you know, D.C. I'm from
12 Brooklyn, New York. And it's interesting, because when I
13 hear about the problems being discussed here, I see that
14 it is universal.

15 And the teachers back home in the city, a lot of
16 their concerns were they didn't know how to manage the
17 classroom. You walk into the class and it's disorderly
18 and so forth.

19 I think what happens to us is we have forgotten that
20 children are children, and we are afraid of our youth.
21 More importantly, whenever you are creating solutions and
22 it's -- you know, you can't do it behind a board room.

23 Those being affected by the problems have to be in on
24 the front table. And they talk about empowerment. The
25 only way you can empower yourself is through education.

1 And the way the education is being given, it's not a give
2 and take.

3 You know, when you look at the classroom, it's a
4 teacher standing in front of you reading from a book, you
5 know, rather than any type of conversation and so forth.

6 So I think, to get to the point -- you know, you talk
7 about violence in the school, because that is the crux of
8 this conversation.

9 There is a school in New York City, Thomas Jefferson,
10 you know. And I don't know if anybody ever heard about
11 it, but at Thomas Jefferson two boys walked into the -- it
12 was like 7:00 in the morning -- middle of the hallway,
13 walked up to two guys and just blasted them, you know,
14 blasted them dead.

15 Okay. Now, I'm trying not to get too emotional about
16 all this, but there is a serious problem. And I don't
17 think we're putting the investment -- you talk about
18 investment.

19 We're not putting the dollars where the dollars
20 really belong. The money is there. We know it. You
21 know, whenever there is a drug bust -- and I often hear it
22 on the news, you know, a \$1 million drug bust. And where
23 is the money going? You know, where does the money
24 disappear to?

25 MR. ADAMS: Well, thank you. Thank you very much.

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1 MS. CHINN: I would like to answer that. I would
2 like to address what you just mentioned. And it was
3 brought up by students in the other jurisdictions, from
4 L.A. to Chicago.

5 And some of them commented, "You come in with a
6 program and you leave."

7 What is happening? Nobody has really addressed --
8 and we're trying to do this in Prince George's County with
9 our little people, with our children.

10 We instituted a program through the human relations
11 office this year, Personal Anger Management. We use the
12 word CALM, C-A-L-M. It's an acronym for a strategy.

13 When you see that prompt, the "C", cool down. Count
14 to ten. Consider the cause and consequences. "A", which
15 is really extremely important, accept responsibility for
16 my actions and reactions.

17 Too many of our students, when confronted with an
18 administrator -- it's, "He made me do it."

19 We are enabling children instead of turning it around
20 and having them accept responsibility. The listen -- the
21 "L" is listen to all sides. Talk it over. And this is
22 where we bring in our peer mediation and conflict
23 resolution programs. We have them working in elementary
24 schools, in high schools, in middle schools.

25 And finally, the "M" is move away, and move on to

1 something else, because we have to validate our young
2 people's anger. It's okay to be mad, but it's not okay to
3 be mean.

4 So we have to channel that energy. And if we do it
5 in a systemic way of teaching young children how to
6 control their anger, then by the time they are seniors it
7 won't be like the shoot-out at Okay Corral.

8 It's just like math. We don't start teaching you
9 trig in first grade. We start out with the basics, and
10 it's developmental. And that's where I think -- it's
11 going to be over the long haul, so that we can go into
12 that 21st Century with safe and orderly environments.

13 MR. ADAMS: Dr. Casserly.

14 DR. CASSELY: I think you are right on target with
15 the notion that we have to involve our young people more
16 in the development of programs and strategies and
17 solutions rather than kind of doing programs to them.

18 You also touch on a broader issue that I also think
19 is very, very important, and that is one of access and
20 equity in this country, and justice.

21 A good part of the violence in this country is, in at
22 least some way, shape, or form, related to issues of
23 access and justice. And to the extent that we continue to
24 deny people access to the fruits of this society, to that
25 extent we will always be faced with issues of violence.

1 MR. ADAMS: Mr. Clark.

2 MR. CLARK: Well, I was struck by what Janet Reno
3 said earlier about the impact of the years zero to three.
4 I'm not sure if it's zero to three, or zero to five, or
5 zero to seven.

6 But the fact of the matter is, an enormous amount of
7 the value structure and perspective and point of view that
8 young people develop comes during those years.

9 And one of the things that has been seen as kind of
10 frivolous for many years, but nevertheless it seems to me
11 is of vital importance, has to do with parenting skills,
12 with developing on the part of people, before they have
13 little babies, some understanding and capacity to deal
14 with those little babies. We don't do much with that.

15 The other problem, which is beyond the range of
16 schools, is essentially the disintegration of the family
17 in this country and the fact that huge numbers of little
18 children grow up in situations where they don't not only
19 have skilled parents; they don't have any parents around.

20 And an awful lot of, you know, what the educators
21 call socializing, is done by peers, is done by their
22 little brothers and sisters, or neighbor kids, or people
23 of that sort.

24 And so I want to make the point that whatever we do
25 in schools and however valuable programs of the sort that

1 we mention that go on in schools can be, one of the larger
2 problems that schools can only do some of comes from some
3 of the social disintegration that is going on community-
4 wide that the whole society has to take responsibility
5 for.

6 We keep adding to the role of schools things that
7 schools are supposed to do. So while I just did that
8 myself by suggesting parenting needs to be taught, I think
9 we also have to go beyond that and accept the fact that
10 schools and what happens in schools are symptomatic.
11 Michael talked about this as a society-wide problem.

12 MR. ADAMS: Let's let Dr. McBay address this. And
13 then I'd like to get -- as many of you as possible, please
14 come on up to the mike, because we want this to be your
15 time. We're not going to stand here and give lectures to
16 you. So we want to hear from you too.

17 Dr. McBay.

18 DR. MCBAY: My concern is that we have tended to
19 focus on violence from the point of view of students who
20 are committing violent acts, from the point of view of
21 parents who may not have parenting skills, from symptoms
22 of that sort, from problems of that sort.

23 Those are really symptoms of larger issues. And it
24 seems to me that there are other adults in society who are
25 inflicting a form of violence, although it's not physical,

1 a form of violence on our young people that we have to
2 address.

3 For example, we profess to value every unborn child,
4 and yet we deny access to prenatal health care so that to
5 make sure that those children are born ready and able to
6 learn.

7 We deny full funding of preschool programs, full
8 daycare kindergarten, all the things that during those
9 early years could make a difference, could help to make up
10 for some of the things that may not be available at home.

11 So my point is that there are others of us in society
12 who have responsibilities that we ought to be attending to
13 in addition to talking about what parents can do and what
14 students themselves can do.

15 MR. ADAMS: Sir, you have been very patient. It's
16 your turn. Go ahead.

17 MR. SALAN: First of all, giving all honor to the
18 Creator for letting all this be possible. I am also here
19 from New York State.

20 And I am a representative, as well as Steadman,
21 Zamila Brewton, and another sister, Carrie, back there, of
22 the New York State Martin Luther King, Jr. Institute for
23 Non-Violence.

24 I think it was Ms. Chinn -- could I turn around and
25 talk to the people for a second? All right. She asked

1 all the teachers if they would stand just for a moment.

2 Could all the teachers stand again, please? Thank
3 you. Go ahead, clap for them.

4 MR. ADAMS: Now, sir, could you turn around, because
5 otherwise we're going to lose the value of seeing you on
6 TV for everyone else.

7 SALAN: All right. I'll stand sideways.

8 MR. ADAMS: Okay. What is your question, sir?

9 SALAN: My question is this: I had everybody stand,
10 because if you looked, there was one African-American male
11 that stood up. Out of every single teacher here that
12 stood up, there was one brother right there that stood up.

13 We had a man -- Mr. Kohl came up here, the
14 Congressman or whoever, and he said 16-year-old boys are
15 lost, that they've been in jail and on a third grade
16 reading level.

17 Mr. Kohl doesn't understand the lifestyle, the
18 background, the history of African-American boys.
19 Teachers have to understand the students who they're
20 teaching. If they don't, then that's miseducation.
21 That's not education.

22 I came here, and like Stead said, the problems that
23 are here, in Buffalo, New York, in Brooklyn, that they're
24 in D.C., too.

25 I think I said it. All right.

1 MR. ADAMS: Okay. Well, thank you very much. That's
2 a very good point though. How do we encourage people to
3 get into the profession of education who are relevant to
4 the people they are teaching?

5 DR. MCBAY: Well, we clearly need to provide better
6 incentives. I think we can begin by actually respecting
7 the teaching profession in general more than we do.

8 MR. ADAMS: All right. Ma'am, please go ahead.

9 AUDIENCE: If I can adjust back quickly, I think the
10 teachers -- it baffles me that teachers are not the
11 highest paid group in this country, because they do make
12 the presidents and the doctors and the lawyers. So if it
13 weren't for them, they wouldn't have the doctors and the
14 lawyers that are paid the most.

15 But my comment is really -- and question is -- I
16 think that basically we are looking for a cause, and
17 you're asking us children what's going on. I don't think
18 that we are quite old enough to understand -- and I say
19 we.

20 I understand, because I was lucky enough to make it
21 through college. But when you are asking high school
22 students, I don't think that we quite understand the level
23 that's -- basically the discontent for the African-
24 American in this country has been elevated to the
25 political and economic levels.

1 And the proof of that is the ghettos that we see and
2 the level of education that we see provided by -- or
3 public education provided by the government.

4 I think that if we could raise the public school
5 education level to a level that we see in these private
6 schools and such, such as the Holton Arms or NCS or other
7 private schools in the area, then we would see a definite
8 change.

9 And you ask what could be done in the schools. We
10 really need to be taught self-respect. I think that -- I
11 was saying that the discontent for the African-American
12 has really trickled down to discontent with ourselves,
13 amongst ourselves.

14 And that does stem from the hatred that we have had
15 historically in this country. So if you wonder where it's
16 coming from, it is from -- we've only been out of slavery
17 approximately 150 years.

18 That's about three lifetimes. That's not too long.
19 So you wonder why we hate ourselves to the point where we
20 kill ourselves. It is because we have lived with other
21 people killing us and now we have nothing better to do but
22 to turn to each other and kill ourselves.

23 MR. ADAMS: All right. .

24 AUDIENCE: So I really think -- my focus is on
25 education also, and if we can teach respect for one

1 another and for other people through the education system.

2 MR. ADAMS: Thank you. Thank you very much. All
3 right. Please come forward. Now, if we could also keep
4 our questions and comments a little bit shorter.

5 We respect what you have to say. We want to keep
6 them fairly short so we can hear from as many people as we
7 can in the limited time we have. So please go ahead.

8 ZAMILA: All right. Hi. My name is Zamila Brewton,
9 and I was wondering if you could bring the camera over
10 here, because I want to address the youth as well. All
11 right.

12 MR. ADAMS: Excuse me. If I could ask you one thing
13 -- when you do that, you deprive our television audience
14 of the chance to see you too. So I think we can work it
15 out, because they will see you on the TV screen here. So
16 please, go right ahead.

17 ZAMILA: All right.

18 MR. ADAMS: Thank you.

19 ZAMILA: Well, okay. The sister who just spoke
20 before me, I agree with a lot of what you had to say,
21 except for one thing, the fact that youth do not know a
22 lot about what they want to do.

23 I think that youth often underestimate their own
24 potential, which is immense. I am a part -- as Salan who
25 spoke before me said, I am a part of the Ella Baker

1 Academy, which is sponsored by the New York State Martin
2 Luther King Commission and Institute for Non-Violence.
3 And part of -- one of our tenets is "Non-violence,
4 learning it, living it, teaching it."

5 A lot of the people who spoke during the first
6 session spoke about -- you know, they did a wonderful job
7 of framing the issue, of getting the problems out there.
8 That's the first step.

9 The brother with D.C. -- the Corp, the Service Corp,
10 he spoke about self-education, which is the second step.
11 And that is most important, because that is the
12 empowerment.

13 I think the third step is even more important, which
14 is going out, taking what you know and spreading it
15 amongst other people so that they too can benefit from it.

16 I am not an elected official. Attorney General Reno
17 spoke about the effect that -- all the elected officials
18 took one student and made a difference in their lives. I
19 am not an elected official, but I am a peer tutor.

20 I make a difference in many student's lives in my own
21 community. I'm a peer mediator. I am trained in conflict
22 resolution. I am a member of the Ella Baker Academy,
23 which means that I go out and try to spread what I know to
24 other people, which I think is most important.

25 And what we have to understand, as youth, is our own

1 immense capability to effect change. Take the issue,
2 understand it, develop a goal. Make a child care center
3 in your own neighborhood.

4 You can do it. You can make a tutoring program. You
5 can do all kinds of things in your community. Understand
6 that. And just go out and make a goal and get that goal
7 accomplished. It's easier -- it's easier than you think.

8 That role model thing -- there are people younger
9 than you. Someone is always looking up at you. Whether
10 you know it or not, someone is always looking at you.

11 There are students younger than you, smaller than
12 you, that are looking at you and saying, "Wow. You know,
13 I like what she is doing. I really like the way he
14 presents himself."

15 Understand that you can be a role model. You don't
16 have to look -- always look up at role models, although
17 they are important. You can be a role model. Okay. You
18 can be a change agent. Thank you.

19 MR. ADAMS: Thank you.

20 Mr. Clark.

21 MR. CLARK: I was simply going to build on what the
22 young lady just said and call attention to the fact that
23 there is a whole growing movement in this country that
24 tried to change the way we look at young people in our
25 society; rather than as recipients of things, looking at

1 young people as resources, and very important resources
2 that are not being adequately used.

3 Congressman Becerra before mentioned the Clinton
4 national service program. And that program, which began
5 really before Clinton's election, has been making
6 available to schools in this country funds through grants
7 administered by the states, program opportunities to
8 develop, youth service projects of the kind that the young
9 lady mentioned.

10 Mediation projects would be examples of that.
11 Mentoring and tutoring projects. All kinds of community
12 action and involvement programs.

13 Up until this year, there has been limited money, \$16
14 million or \$17 million for K-12 programs. If the Clinton
15 plan is approved and if the recommended appropriation,
16 which I understand will be funded, is funded fully, there
17 will be something in the neighborhood of \$40 million
18 available for K-12 programs in the service area.

19 And I think, more than anything else right now, that
20 will provide the incentive, along with this movement to
21 recognize young people as resources, to stimulate the
22 development of all kinds of opportunities in schools all
23 over the country, because the money is distributed
24 according to population to build and create and start the
25 kinds of activities that young people indicate an interest

1 in being part of.

2 MR. ADAMS: Dr. Casserly.

3 DR. CASSERLY: Just a quick remark as a follow-up to
4 the energy of our last speaker, and also the question and
5 comment of the gentleman about the need for more African-
6 American teachers, particularly in our city schools.

7 We do need more African-American teachers in our
8 schools, and teachers of all races who are more racially
9 sensitive. I would encourage each of you to seriously
10 look at becoming a teacher. We need you.

11 MR. ADAMS: All right, ma'am.

12 AUDIENCE: Beyond just having those teachers though,
13 in order to have a multi-cultural understanding within our
14 cities, we also need to have the education there. And in
15 the education, I mean that you can instill role models
16 within education.

17 In this country there is a lack of African-American
18 history, Asian-American history, the Hispanic, Native
19 American history within our schools. It is not part of
20 our curriculum.

21 I mean, if you want to have role models, there are
22 plenty of African-American leaders throughout history,
23 which people do not learn about. And if you open up the
24 textbooks, they are not there. And there is a lack of
25 that.

1 And I see that as of extreme importance, especially
2 in the face of the L.A. riots, in the face of what has
3 been going on. Race relations should be a bigger and
4 bigger issue in this country. It's an issue which the
5 country continues to ignore.

6 The urban aid package was vetoed last year. L.A.
7 hasn't been rebuilt. And at the same time, like even in
8 conversations like this, in dialogue like this, I was
9 severely disappointed by the lack of an Asian-American
10 student on the panel, on the student panel. And I think
11 that there needs to be an understanding between all races.

12 And my other point, which is going back actually, to
13 what other people said, was the fact that the education
14 problems, violence in our schools, is a symptom of a
15 society.

16 It's not just putting more funding into education.
17 It's also putting more funding into families, into the
18 cities themselves. I mean, the cities and all these
19 programs have lost funding.

20 For the last 12 years, there has been nothing. I
21 mean, there's been no comprehensive child welfare reform
22 bill for the last 12 or 13 years. I mean, it's time.
23 Dialogue is good. New programs are good. But where is
24 the money?

25 MR. ADAMS: Okay.

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1 MS. CHINN: I'd like to -- if you would come back,
2 the student. I would like to just address -- I too, since
3 I am an Asian-American -- we notice things like that. We
4 notice right away when we are not included or you are not
5 reflective.

6 You bring up a good point about cross-cultural
7 diversity. And a lot of the conflict that we're seeing
8 comes from cross-cultural conflict, the inability to
9 communicate with one another. Just even the body language
10 of one group may seriously offend another group.

11 In our school system, we have increased our human
12 relations office so that we can go out into the schools
13 and work with students on sensitivity awareness workshops,
14 developing interpersonal skills.

15 We also use "A World of Difference," which is a
16 prejudice reduction sensitivity awareness project
17 sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League of Banai Brith.
18 But it's -- what you said is critical. We need to learn
19 how to get along. We are diverse.

20 AUDIENCE: I mean, the fact of the matter is --
21 everyone is focusing on having these special projects and
22 everything else, but the fact of the matter is, this stuff
23 needs to be within our textbooks. This needs to be part
24 of our basic curriculum. I mean, I -- when in college --
25 I'm a black studies major.

1 And people are like, "What? You're a black studies
2 major? You're an Asian girl."

3 And, I mean, it's been extremely educational for me.
4 But what I found more of was the disbelief. And the
5 reason in which I'm glad I did what I did was to educate
6 other people, because it is shocking, the amount of
7 misunderstanding that is between -- or just lack of
8 knowledge, ignorance between --

9 MS. CHINN: But multi-cultural education, that is
10 becoming more and more prevalent. We have a very rigorous
11 program in Prince George's County to address that, because
12 our school system underwent extreme demographic changes
13 and because our population is now predominantly a minority
14 population.

15 We have had to meet the needs of our students. They
16 need to see themselves reflected in their textbooks. They
17 need to see themselves reflected throughout the teachers,
18 administrators. It has to be visible in order for it to
19 sink in.

20 MR. ADAMS: Let me raise a couple of questions I'd
21 like you to think about, and let's talk about it a minute.
22 And we're going to move on down the line now and hear from
23 some other people.

24 A couple of things. We keep hearing about everything
25 that is happening to young people. A couple of people

1 mentioned the media.

2 Do you think that the media is really a factor in the
3 kind of violence we are seeing in the schools? Okay.
4 We'll think about this. And then I'm going to ask this
5 lady who is at the microphone to speak.

6 Let's talk about the media. Let's talk about rap
7 music. Let's talk about rap music. Right here in
8 Washington, just last week a couple of bands couldn't
9 play, because the city decided that just having them there
10 was going to cause violence.

11 There was a shooting in a dance hall Saturday night.
12 Two kids were dancing. One bumped the other.

13 Somebody said, "Don't dis me."

14 The next thing you know, he pulled out a gun, shot
15 two people right there in the dance hall. Now, this is
16 big city stuff.

17 But I also want to hear from some of you from the
18 rural areas, if you could come forward too. I want to
19 hear what is happening outside of the big cities. Let's
20 talk about some of these things. So come on up to the
21 mike. We have about 15 more minutes. I want to hear from
22 as many of you as we can.

23 Now, ma'am, please go ahead with your point.

24 MS. TRUESDALE: Good morning. First of all, let me
25 say that I am one of these children. I came from the

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1 inner city. I am a fourth generation Washingtonian. And
2 I understand a lot of the problems that they have that
3 generate violence. I want you to understand that.

4 I want to agree with this young man who said that we
5 need to come out of our board rooms and come on the
6 campuses and walk and talk with our children so that they
7 will understand and that we will understand. We cannot
8 understand them sitting in the board room.

9 My name is Sondra Butler Truesdale. I represent the
10 Board of Education in Ward Four. That is why I said that.
11 I walk with my children. I come to my schools. I talk
12 with them and try to find out what the problems are.

13 I've found that one of the problems is that young
14 people have not been trained in conflict resolution in
15 school or at home. Their parents often do not come to
16 them.

17 They do not train them in problem resolve. Many of
18 them are very, very young and they do not know problem
19 resolve themselves.

20 So what we must do, as board members and as people
21 who are elected officials, we must put programs together
22 that will even teach parents conflict resolution so that
23 they can then teach their young people.

24 They often are perpetuating violence out of pure
25 frustration. I have found that to be a fact. Our young

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1 people are getting -- they are dying for attention.

2 A lot of the conflict that they have is purely
3 because we as adults are not giving them the attention
4 that they deserve, not even the parents, not even those
5 persons who are elected officials.

6 We sit in our board rooms and we talk about putting
7 together policy when we know not what policy we should put
8 forth. So I am saying to you -- and I know that time is
9 of the essence here today -- but I am saying to you that
10 we need to come together and come up with some resolves.

11 We just passed some policy at the Board of Education
12 yesterday with the trade unions from the District of
13 Columbia to develop apprenticeship programs that would
14 challenge young people. We need education that is going
15 to be challenging to them.

16 I will sit down, because I realize that this is for
17 young people, but I came to listen. I took time out of my
18 schedule to come here and sit down and listen to these
19 young people.

20 But as I sat down to listen to them, I realized that
21 people that purely pass -- people that make policy -- I
22 heard her say, "Let all teachers stand up."

23 I would venture to say that there probably isn't
24 another board member in this audience today to listen.
25 And that is something that we need to do.

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1 MR. ADAMS: Well, let's see. Is there anybody else
2 here from school boards or school administration?

3 AUDIENCE: The School Boards Association.

4 MR. ADAMS: All right.

5 AUDIENCE: I am certainly glad to see people --

6 MR. ADAMS: Very good. You know, Ms. Truesdale
7 raises a good point.

8 Please come up. We'll get to you in just a second.

9 How do you close that gap? I've been to meetings, as
10 a reporter covering schools, and people will talk for two
11 hours and never mention students. What do you do? How do
12 you close that gap?

13 MS. CHINN: Make sure that they are here. You make
14 sure that they are invited and that they are participants.
15 And I think it was right this morning, because they
16 started out. We heard from them first. They are our
17 clients.

18 MR. ADAMS: Go ahead.

19 MS. BURNETT: My name is Sarah Burnett and I go to
20 Georgetown Visitation. I don't have much of a school
21 left, but when we did have it we didn't have these kind of
22 problems.

23 MR. ADAMS: We should say for our TV audience -- the
24 school was damaged, wasn't it?

25 MS. BURNETT: It was burned down.

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1 MR. ADAMS: It burned. Yes. In a very serious fire
2 here in Washington, D.C. Go ahead.

3 MS. BURNETT: We don't have these kind of problems at
4 our school. And I feel very fortunate that we don't. But
5 my observation is, things -- it wasn't always like this.

6 I mean, there weren't always metal detectors in
7 schools. There weren't always guns in the hands of second
8 graders, like the video said. People weren't always
9 shooting each other.

10 This gentleman from New York was telling about how
11 two people were shot down in his school. And I don't
12 think anybody flinched an eye. Everybody hears about
13 that, and everybody is so desensitized.

14 You talk about -- I come from a rural area. I live
15 in Arlington, Virginia. But there isn't violence in my
16 school, but there is violence in my neighborhood.

17 I have a friend of mine who was 12 years old. He got
18 arrested for selling sawed-off shotguns. I mean, it's
19 everywhere. It's not just in the cities. It's
20 everywhere.

21 And I just -- America kind of has the problem of
22 dealing with stuff too late. Why is it now that the metal
23 detectors are there and the guns are there, that now we're
24 starting to care?

25 I mean, it started out with one metal detector, one

1 gun, and it's gotten to where we have armed security
2 guards at school. People go to school to learn, not to be
3 shot. I mean, why is it that you're dealing with it too
4 late, and where do you think it started?

5 MR. ADAMS: Good point. How much are you willing to
6 put up with? How much are you willing to -- are you
7 willing to walk through metal detectors?

8 Are you willing not to wear the clothes you want to
9 wear to school because somebody may hit you in the head
10 and take them away? Are you willing to do that? Is that
11 a sacrifice you are willing to make? Let's hear from
12 somebody about that too.

13 Yes, ma'am. Go ahead.

14 MS. WILLIS: Good morning. I'm Sandra Willis and I'm
15 a teacher in the D.C. school system. I just wanted to say
16 that I think sometimes on the panel -- but you need to ask
17 teachers: What are some of the problems that we are
18 having in our schools?

19 We are there. We tend to know what the problems are.
20 And we do serve a counselors. We do serve as mothers,
21 fathers, and everything.

22 I do know, in my summer school class right now I have
23 a young girl who is 15 years old who has had drug
24 rehabilitation. She is now in the alcoholic
25 rehabilitation center. And she is a major problem.

1 And, of course, what we have to do -- what I have
2 found is that every morning she ventures into that room I
3 give her a big hug and tell her, "I'm so glad you're
4 here."

5 So what I want you to understand is that you need to
6 pay teachers first of all. You pay everybody else except
7 teachers.

8 And I do know, in the District of Columbia, that we
9 have not had a raise for four years. And the problems
10 that we have here are so insurmountable that we can't talk
11 about them.

12 But I do love teaching. I think that most of us who
13 teach are in teaching by choice. That's because we love
14 it. We enjoy it. And I do enjoy, personally, working
15 with all children, regardless of race, color, or creed.
16 And I do teach multi-cultural education, because I think
17 it is so needed.

18 And so I ask that when you start talking about
19 children, understand first who they are, that -- I find
20 that children, students, know the answer more so than we.
21 So ask them, because that's where the power is.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. ADAMS: Thank you. Any comments from the panel?

24 MR. BRUNO: Go right ahead. Don't be afraid. Step
25 right up.

1 MS. WASHINGTON: I'm Steph Washington. I'm 12 years
2 old. I can't really talk about like my experiences with
3 the violence in school, because I haven't really seen that
4 yet, but I've heard a lot of, were going to do this, and
5 this is going to happen soon, but what about this is
6 happening now, and we're doing this right now. You know,
7 you can't just talk about what you're going to do. You
8 have to do it.

9 MR. BRUNO: What do the kids say when they talk about
10 something going to happen? Does that scare you? And is
11 there something you think maybe we as adults could do?
12 What do you think?

13 MS. WASHINGTON: Well, I'm just saying that you
14 can't, like, you can't fix anything just by saying we're
15 going to fix it. You have to do it.

16 MR. ADAMS: Words don't mean anything unless there's
17 actions behind them.

18 MS. WASHINGTON: Right.

19 MR. ADAMS: Good. What do you think, please?

20 DR. MCBAY: I think until we as a society really
21 value what is happening to our young people, and see that
22 as a priority, I mean we manage to find the resources and
23 the energy when we have crises, why don't we see that we
24 have a crisis in our schools today.

25 Until we understand as a country that this is our

1 future that we're talking about, and that we need to do
2 something, beginning with the most violent act of all, in
3 my view, and that is the practice of tracking and ability
4 grouping, which ends up denying our children the quality
5 of education they need, the skills they need to be
6 successful.

7 Until we understand that, that the frustration that a
8 lot of these students are reflecting is frustration due to
9 their lack of skills, their inability to get quality jobs,
10 and have a bright future.

11 And until we understand all of that, and consider
12 this a major crisis for this country, then we will
13 continue to have these sessions, we will continue to hear
14 the nightly statistics, and not do anything about it, as
15 she is suggesting.

16 MR. ADAMS: Mr. Clark.

17 MR. CLARK: I'm sorry we don't have more time, but
18 I'd really like to hear students describe what life is
19 like in their schools, what is it like to go to four or
20 five or six classes a day.

21 What happens in those classrooms? Is it interesting?
22 Is it stimulating? Do you learn there? Are you turned on
23 by the text materials, by the way it's presented to you?

24 I think this gets down to one of the basic questions.
25 We've got a huge -- whether it's inner city, or elsewhere,

1 we've got a huge number of kids who don't finish high
2 school in this country.

3 Why is it that they don't finish high school? What
4 happens in those classrooms and in those schools that
5 cause so many young people to give up, to feel frustrated,
6 to simply not think school is a place that can help them?
7 In some of the time we have left I'd like to hear some
8 response to that.

9 MR. ADAMS: We have about five minutes, so let's see
10 what we can do. Sir, please, go ahead.

11 MR. BORDER: My name is Richard Border. I'm school
12 superintendent on the Rosewood Indian Reservation in
13 south-central South Dakota.

14 I guess I wanted someone to come up here and talk a
15 little bit about the violence in schools and other
16 problems I guess we have in the rural areas.

17 We have a lot of teachers here from the rural states.
18 I'm from South Dakota. We have some from Montana, Utah,
19 Kansas, Nebraska, our sister state of confusion, North
20 Dakota, but we have -- sitting here and listening to the
21 students from the urban communities, and the teachers, and
22 the administrators, and the board members, and the
23 congressional people, you know, all the problems that
24 we're having out on the Indian reservations and in rural
25 America, the problems are the same.

1 The solutions are probably going to be the same, but
2 I think our main thing is that the impact, because we are
3 widespread, like our geography, the impact out on rural
4 America is more severe. I wanted to add something
5 different here from the rural people. Thank you.

6 MR. ADAMS: Thank you, sir.

7 MS. CHINN: I think that it's not, although you live
8 in a rural area, within seconds the technology of the
9 media is bringing it all right into your homes.

10 If this is what our children are seeing, and if this
11 is the way they think that conflicts can be solved, this
12 is what they're going to emulate. It's what they're
13 seeing in the media.

14 It's how they're seeing children -- how do children
15 know how to dress? It begins a great wave, from maybe
16 California, and it waves across the country, so the styles
17 are picked up on the East Coast, or do the styles start on
18 the East Coast? But children all over America know how to
19 dress, because that message comes across.

20 So they also know how to act in violent situations,
21 and react in a violent way, because they see that that
22 culture of adolescence across the country acting the same
23 way.

24 MR. ADAMS: Sir, thank you for waiting. Please go
25 ahead.

1 AUDIENCE: I'm a student in Southeast D.C. The
2 violence in southeast schools is, I mean you really --
3 when you walk in the building in the morning you've got to
4 go through security, walk through a metal detector, they
5 check your book bag, they check you for pagers, weapons.

6 They're laying off teachers in schools. I mean there
7 are a lot of teachers working hard, trying to get us to
8 graduate, and they're laying them off.

9 I don't feel that they should lay off most of the
10 teachers that they're laying off. They're working hard.
11 I don't see how the teachers can do what they're doing
12 every day. (Applause.)

13 I mean we are all trying to get out of school, but,
14 you know, some of us are working a little harder than
15 others. (Laughter.)

16 So the ones that are working, we have to do something
17 to say to the teachers, hey, we're trying.

18 MR. ADAMS: I know you're trying. Thank you very,
19 very much.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. ADAMS: We're very, very short on time here now.
22 I'd like to ask each one of the people on the panel very,
23 very quickly to give a quick summary, and we're going to
24 wrap up. If we do have a second, we'll get one more
25 question.

1 Do we have a second? I'm just going to ask this --
2 we don't. I'm told that the powers that be say that we're
3 about out of town.

4 But this is going to go on for a couple of days for
5 our T.V. audience, and they'll be more discussion here in
6 the Washington area.

7 So we'll have to not take any more from the floor
8 right now. But we appreciate that. Very quickly down the
9 panel. Let's start with Dr. Casserly.

10 DR. CASSERLY: I'd just like to make one additional
11 point. In addition to urging the students to consider
12 teaching as a profession once you get out of high school,
13 to also become more involved in the political process of
14 working with your elected representatives, and urging them
15 to adopt the kind of programs to create safe schools that
16 we all know that we need to have, so, in fact, action is
17 done when the lights go out here.

18 MR. ADAMS: Dr. McBay.

19 DR. McBAY: I just think we need to pay more
20 attention to the quality of education that the majority of
21 minority students are receiving, that that will not happen
22 until we dismantle the factory model educational system
23 that we have in place, a system that is only producing an
24 elite, an elite that is predominantly white.

25 MR. ADAMS: Thank you. Mr. Clark.

1 MR. CLARK: I think we'll produce safe schools when
2 we provide young people with stimulating and friendly
3 environments for them to go to each day, where their
4 classrooms are interactive places, or what they're asked
5 to do in instruction seems to have some resemblance to the
6 real lives that they live in their communities.

7 I think that law-related education provides many
8 opportunities for that to happen. And I think also that
9 the movement to recognize young people as resources.

10 And to involve them in their schools and in their
11 communities in positive and in constructive activity is
12 the best way to teach responsibility and commitment to
13 positive community values.

14 MR. ADAMS: And then Ms. Chinn.

15 MS. CHINN: There is an African proverb that says:
16 It takes an entire village to teach one child. And unless
17 we come together, business, schools, communities,
18 government agencies, parents, unless we work together, we
19 can never solve this problem.

20 MR. ADAMS: Thank you. Well, that is all the time we
21 have right now for this discussion. I want to thank
22 everyone here on our panel of experts who have joined us.

23 We want to thank all of you, the teachers and the
24 students. We want to thank Ameritech for our production
25 and teleconferencing facilities, and to the organizers of

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1 this meeting, the National Training and Dissemination
2 Program, which is a coalition of five national law-related
3 groups.

4 We also want to thank one particular person, Aggie
5 Alvez. Give her a hand. She put this together.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. ADAMS: This video town meeting has been
8 supported by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of
9 Juvenile Delinquency and Delinquency Prevention.

10 And finally to the teachers, the parents, and all the
11 other adults who touch the lives of all the young people
12 in this room, thank you for your commitment and caring.

13 We have a big job ahead, we can do it. And Crosby,
14 Stills, and Nash, from the sixties, if you remember your
15 oldies, have the right idea, teach your children well, and
16 know they love you. I'm Rich Adams.

17 (Applause.)

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