

**REMARKS OF ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO  
ZAHAV/EMERALD EVENT FOR NATIONAL  
WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN UNITED JEWISH APPEAL**

Monday, September 18, 1995  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C.

Thank you very much, Bunny, for your gracious introduction. I am delighted that you asked me to address your Zahav/Emerald Event. I want to thank the women of the Jewish community for your very visible, compassionate, and dedicated role in improving the lives of women and children both in the United States and around the world. I particularly want to acknowledge your work in Israel, our sister democracy which shares with us a system of government under law, dedication to equal rights, and devotion to justice for all. Your tireless work in meeting the social welfare needs of Jews throughout the world is a

vivid testament to Jewish tradition which says: "Pray as though everything depends on God. Act as though everything depends on you."

I would like to talk to you this morning about my commitment, and that of the entire Administration, to advancing women and creating a safer society for all Americans.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

Since taking office, President Clinton has worked hard to make women full partners in governing and to make government work for all in America, including women.

President Clinton has honored his commitment to make government look like all of America by appointing women and minorities at the very highest levels. At the

Department of Justice, women currently hold 10 of the 23

senior positions that require Senate confirmation. There are 21 women serving as United States Attorneys in jurisdictions across the country.

President Clinton has also changed the face of the federal judiciary. A crisis gripped the federal courts when President Clinton took office. The Administration inherited 113 vacancies -- more than any President in modern times. Many more vacancies have arisen since then. The Administration has attacked the problem vigorously. To date, 185 judges have been nominated, 166 of whom have been confirmed by the Senate, far more than any other President has achieved at this point in his term. The remaining nominations will be taken up by the Senate Judiciary Committee soon.

We are extremely proud of the quality of these judicial nominees. The ABA has rated 65% of the President's nominees "well qualified", the highest rating possible. This stands in contrast to the nominees of Presidents Bush and Reagan, only half of which received "well-qualified" ratings.

We are equally proud that under President Clinton the federal judiciary is being opened to women and persons of color on a scale unprecedented in our history. Women and minorities account for 52% of the President's judicial nominees; women represent 29%, including 9 women appointed to the courts of appeals and 44 women appointed to the federal district courts. Many are the first women to serve on their courts. Many are women of color. All of them bring a unique perspective and energy to the business of judging. This record indicates that

diversity need not come at the expense of excellence. The quality and depth of President Clinton's judicial appointments demonstrate that achieving the goal of diversity on the federal bench is consistent with maintaining the qualities of intellectual talent and judicial temperament that are essential qualifications for federal judges.

### **THE VIOLENT CRIME CONTROL ACT**

The Justice Department has been at the forefront of the Administration's efforts to make government responsive to women's concerns. Fear of crime and violence are among the most pressing concerns we face today.

One year ago, the President signed into law the Violent Crime Control Act of 1994, the most comprehensive package of crime fighting initiatives in the

history of this country. It is based on a balanced approach to crime - one that combines policing, prevention and punishment. One of my top priorities as Attorney General has been ensuring that the Violent Crime Control Act is implemented quickly and effectively.

Community Oriented Policing Services - known as COPS - has been the keystone of our first year of effort. In my report to the President last week, I was pleased to inform him that in less than twelve months the COPS program has authorized grants for 25,000 new police officers in urban and rural communities across the country. Flexible and innovative COPS grants have helped hard-pressed departments pay for new technology and equipment, as well as administrative staff to free up more rank and file officers to walk the beat. COPS has joined

with the Department of Defense to encourage the hiring of recently separated members of the military as community policing officers. We are also working with local law enforcement to develop innovative community policing efforts to reduce domestic violence.

### **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT**

The Clinton Administration has done more than any other in history to fight violence against women including domestic violence and sexual abuse. The Violence Against Women Act combines tough new penalties with programs to prosecute offenders, train police officers, and help women victims.

The Violence Against Women Act represents a fundamental change in our criminal justice system's response to crimes committed against women. It is a

comprehensive approach, combining a broad array of legal and practical reforms. It is a substantial commitment of federal resources -- more than \$1.6 billion during the next six years -- for police, prosecution, prevention, and victim service initiatives.

Bonnie Campbell, the Director of the Department's Violence Against Women Office, will be speaking to you this afternoon and tell you much more about our important initiatives under the Violence Against Women Act.

### **FREEDOM OF ACCESS TO CLINIC ENTRANCES ACT**

A further demonstration of the Administration's commitment to defend the rights of women - and particularly their reproductive rights - is the Justice Department's aggressive stance in enforcing the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act. This law, signed by



President Clinton, allows prosecution of crimes committed against abortion clinics and persons providing services in them, including physical obstruction at clinics, the use of force or threat of force against persons providing services at clinics, and the destruction of abortion clinic property, including arson. Since June 1994, 10 criminal cases and 8 civil cases have been filed pursuant to this Act. We recently won the first federal conviction under the Act against Paul Hill, who was convicted of murdering a doctor outside an abortion clinic. In response to this and other incidents of violence, the Department has ordered federal marshals to protect certain clinics and the doctors and staff who work there. The Department has also assembled a Task Force on Violence Against Abortion Providers, including prosecutors, civil litigators, and law enforcement.

It is charged with investigating clinic and abortion related crimes on a national basis.

## **TERRORISM**

Turning to another aspect of violence, terrorism is one of the greatest threats to our domestic tranquility. Deputy Gorelick will address this in detail. But I want to assure you that the protection of the citizens of this nation against threats of terrorism is of the utmost importance to this Administration. We will respond forcefully to terrorism, but within constitutional limits.

## **YOUTH INITIATIVES**

Another area in which I have been deeply involved since my days as a States Attorney in Dade County, Florida is the need to prevent and respond to the problems of youth in our communities. In addition to strengthening

the laws covering prosecution of juveniles for violent crimes or crimes involving guns, I have tried to focus on crime prevention. The Violent Crime Control Act authorized a number of programs to help steer youngsters away from crime. Many of these programs are scheduled to begin next month with the beginning of Fiscal Year 1996. Funds have been authorized; it remains for Congress to appropriate them.

I believe these programs provide valuable tools for helping to prevent youth involvement in criminal activity. There programs will provide residential services to school dropouts; supervised after-school, weekend, and summer programs for at-risk youth; anti-gang programs, sports leagues, boys and girls clubs, police partnerships with children, and youth skills programs.

I firmly believe that in order to stem the tide of violence among youth, we as adults cannot just hope that fear of prosecution and punishment will deter them from committing crimes. We must provide them with positive alternatives. We have a moral responsibility to take care of all our families and children. If we leave our youth without hope, without possibilities, without healthy family, school and neighborhood environments, there will never be enough police officers and prisons to contain the devastation that is already sweeping over our nation. That is why I see the crime prevention youth initiatives in the Crime Act as so imperative.

## **HATE CRIMES**

The Justice Department plays a central role in many other ways to make our nation safe for all Americans. I

would like to mention just a few.

Hate crime has been defined by the Department of Justice's Community Relations Service as a criminal offense which is motivated by the offender's bias against a race, religion, ethnic or sexual orientation group. The FBI collects data on hate crimes. During 1993, over 7,500 bias-motivated criminal incidents were reported to the FBI. 62% of the incidents were motivated by racial bias; 17% by religious bias; 11% by sexual-orientation bias; and 9% by ethnicity bias. With regard to the approximately 1300 religious bias incidents, the vast majority, over 1100, were anti-Jewish. Hate crime is not just an act of violence. It is symptomatic of a festering sore in our society that not only places each one of us at risk but also threatens the very fabric that binds our nation together.

Most crimes of this nature are investigated and prosecuted on the local level. Prosecutions typically involving cross burnings, skinhead attacks, and bombings of religious buildings. Our Criminal Division relies heavily on such organizations as Klanwatch and the Anti-Defamation League to monitor these incidents.

The FBI trains local law enforcement agencies throughout the nation on recognition of hate crimes, their psychology, and effective investigation. This training results in better data collection and more vigorous prosecution.

Three new programs are particularly aimed at youth. The Juvenile Hate Crime Study examines the complex issues in defining hate crimes, and the involvement of juveniles. The second program supports the development

and implementation of a hate crime prevention curriculum for middle and high school students. We hope a model curriculum will be available soon for national replication. Finally, only a few weeks ago the Department announced a grant to the project "Facing History and Ourselves", another youth hate crime prevention program which focuses on the Holocaust.

### **RIGHTS OF DISABLED AND ELDERLY**

Another area in which the Justice Department is dedicated to making our society safer for all Americans is protection of disabled persons and senior citizens. The Department is engaged in vigorous enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This Act, whose fifth anniversary we have just celebrated, protects the rights of physically and emotionally disabled persons of all ages. It

particularly touches the lives of the elderly. A survey conducted by the Census Bureau revealed that 49 million Americans reported having some type of disability. As America continues to age, the number of disabled persons will continue to increase. Currently, there are 31 million persons aged 65 and older; by 2030, the number will rise to 66 million, or 21% of the population. Nearly half of all persons over age 65 have some functional limitations in their ability to perform physical activities.

Through its enforcement activities, the Civil Rights Division has achieved greater access for individuals with disabilities in over 250 cases around the country. Just this month, Avis, the nation's second largest car rental company, agreed to provide cars with hand controls.

Several large cities have agreed to improve service on 911



emergency numbers for hearing-impaired citizens. Physical and communication barriers in town halls, courtrooms, and legislative chambers have been eliminated. The Scholastic Assessment Test, bar review courses, and CPA review courses have been made more accessible. Nationwide reform efforts have been undertaken to curb overly broad inquiries by state licensing officials into the mental health histories of applicants for professional licenses in law and medicine. At this very moment, a few blocks away, the Department is conducting a special training session for Assistant United States Attorneys from all over the country to increase our capacity in this area.

But the Department is involved in more than enforcement--education and assistance to accomplish change is equally important. To this end, we have a wide

ranging technical assistance program through which we have distributed information to the public, established a toll-free information line that receives approximately 6,500 calls each month from the public, and provided grants to trade associations and other organizations for the development of specially-tailored publications. Working together makes compliance easier and more effective.

## **CONCLUSION**

All of the issues I have address this morning demonstrate the Department's--and the entire Administration's--commitment to achieving justice, security, and equality in our society. Once again, it is Jewish tradition which admonishes us: "It is not our responsibility to finish the task; neither is it our responsibility to desist." We each have an obligation for ourselves, our children, and

our communities to continue to toil in the cause of making America safer and more just for all Americans. Like you, I, along with the President, am committed to that task.