STATEMENT OF HON. JANET RENO, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVE
Tuesday, October 3, 2000
Omni Shoreham Hotel
Washington, D.C.
8:40 a.m.

Attorney General Reno: I told some of you a couple of minutes ago that there are some high points and some low points to this job, but this is one of the big high points because I am so proud and so happy to be here.

You have been on the front lines. You have worked with your communities. You have a vision. You have the skill to implement your visions and make them a reality, and you have been doing so all across the country.

To have people from the community come to Washington as partners, to have the academic institutions represented here, to have the state and local law enforcement, I just think it is an example of what we can do if we work together, if we build partnerships, and if we look at the whole perspective of crime from the point of view of how we solve this problem.

I became the State Attorney in Miami in January of 1978. Law enforcement has changed a great deal since that time. In those days, police measured their success by the number of arrests. We measured success when I first took office by the number of cases filed.

If we really got smart, we talked about the number of convictions, and then the length of time the serious offenders were being sentenced, but it was all a numbers game.

The first example that I saw of what could be done if we looked at a problem and figured out how to solve it rather than just the numbers game was, first of all, you had to be very brave.

If you had to run for office as I did, you had to say, "Um, I have got to explain to the people that the number of cases filed is not going to be the solution. It is going to be how we solve the problem."

Our medical examiner called us and he said, "Why don't you come find out why people have been killed in this county for the last 20 years? We have got some good records, but nobody's gone through it."

We found that 40 percent of the homicides in that county were related to domestic violence over that 20-year period. And we got an LEAA grant and developed the Domestic Violence Intervention Program. We ran into a road block.

The State said, "We'll take -- can't take over after the LEAA grant runs out because that's not a prosecution function," that somebody else should be doing that.

But, we got the county to take it over, and that program is still in effect. Now there are other ways that you solve problems.

Gentlemen, forgive me, but the police were not that interested in domestics. The Courts were not that interested in domestics until suddenly there were some captains in various precincts, and there were lady judges on the bench, and there were whole new approaches to the problem of domestic violence. And we see what has happened today.

You look at a problem and you solve it any way you can. It is the problem that has got to be solved, but you figure out the right way to do it.

Community policing has become another force across this

country, but we have got to remember that you had community entities. We had a JP court in our state that was a community court, but we got rid of it because it had created fiefdoms across the state.

And there is an evolution to different ideas as you solve problems. But I think we come today to a proliferation of community initiatives that recognize we have come too far from the people we serve, and it is important to involve them in the solution of the problem and in determining how the problem should be solved. We have got to hear from them and confirm with hard data what needs to be in particular communities.

I came to Washington looking at it from a problem solving point of view. And one of the first problems I wanted to solve was "them feds," "them feds" that came to town saying, "We want this, and this, and this, and this is the way you should do things, and you cannot have the grant unless you do it that way because we know better how to do it in Winston-Salem than those of you in Winston-Salem know how to do it."

And I resolved that we needed to -- the first step we needed to take was to establish a partnership, a partnership that was based on principles of federalism, that was based on understanding that people closest to the problem knew best how to deal with it, but that the federal government could provide resources and could provide technical assistance by showing people what were the best practices, what worked, and what did not work, and how we could be a true strong partner.

It has been so gratifying to me to see the leadership of the U.S. Attorneys in this room focus on that, and build those partnerships that are so vitally important.

It has been wonderful to see the Office of Justice programs galvanize itself and become a giving/taking partner, saying, "That program works. Here is a best practice. Why do you not try this? We can provide this technical assistance. How can we help you?"

But most of all, it is just wonderful to go to so many communities across this nation where the partnerships have been formed, but most of all, in seeing what you have done through the first five cities of the strategic approaches, and now to see it being expanded to the next five. It makes me believe in government.

If you are a prosecutor in Miami for 15 years, you see the crime rate go up a little bit, down a little bit. You think you are winning, and then it goes back up. Because of you all, I think we have shown America that if we work together in a non-partisan, thoughtful way, if we base our actions on solid information, solid research, if we use common sense, if we evaluate what works and doesn't work, we can make an extraordinary difference.

When Ronnie Coleman told me what she was going to do in Memphis, I thought -- where did you go, Ronnie? There you are.

I thought, lady, you are biting off more than you can chew. But you have done it. Just to see the people here today, to see the results that you have obtained, it is an example, again, of what can be done.

Indianapolis -- went to Indianapolis and some of the state and local officials said, "It cannot be done." But, it has been, and we have seen statistics prove what is happening there.

When I got to Winston-Salem, I saw people coming together in an extraordinary way. I saw young men with police officers who were trainees, learning how to work together, and to talk together, and to solve problems together.

In Boston, I have seen, over the years, one success after another, but I have also had a mayor call me saying, "Something is happening here. We have got to be prepared to respond." And they are prepared to respond because they are acting on hard, good data.

Portland has been a wonderful way to look at how we can do

things again together. But you recognize that each community is going to be different.

And if I have one piece of advice for you today: Learn all you can from your colleagues, but remember the people that you learn most from are those in the community that you serve. Remember that that community changes before your eyes as new immigrants come, as a new business comes in, or as a business leaves, or as a chief executive officer who is one of your spark plugs is transferred or gets a promotion.

New Haven has been a wonderful example of what can be done working with institutions of higher education. You have got success stories everywhere, but I would like to get to the heart of this.

How do we make it work for the future? How do we get people to accept the strategic approaches approach? How do we take the vision that is in this room, the dedication that is in this room, and make it work?

First of all, do not become complacent. Do not assume that because community policing is alive and well in your jurisdiction, or at least you think it is, that it is. You may go to a particular neighborhood and it may be working beautifully. You may go to another neighborhood where a new shift of police officers has come in and it is just not working.

This effort requires a constant vigilance. It requires a commitment to providing some sustainability in method, in programs, in what works and what doesn't work. And I can tell you that one of the problems is you think everything is going just right. Now I can turn my attention and start expanding it.

And you expand it, and you find that the sergeant who ran the community policing initiative in the precinct has been promoted to lieutenant and there is another curmudgeon sergeant in there that does not like community policing, has not gotten the message yet, and is back to traditional

policing because that is what his father did.

We have got to continue to work at it. We have got to make sure that we do not create new problems. As with the JP court that I describe to your earlier, JPs have become small tyrants in their fiefdoms.

We have got to constantly monitor our community activities to make sure that we use them the right way and that we do not let people become set in their ways, but that we continue the creativity and the thoughtfulness that goes into these programs. We have got to be prepared for new problems.

I thought I was finally winning the battle in about 1984. Crime was down three years in a row in Miami. Suddenly, there was a strange substance. They said it was cocaine, but it really was not cocaine. It was violence, infighting, compulsively addictive, and nobody knew what it meant, but we knew what it meant because the crime rate started back up dramatically. We learned more and more about crack over the next ten years.

Watch for the danger signals. Is there a new drug that is hitting your community? The Department of Justice has got to undertake new efforts in this regard. Instead of saying, "Well, there is something called crack," we have got to get universities and medical schools researching just what it is, what it does. We have got to understand its distribution system at the get go. We have got to understand what the best treatment is.

In 1988, there was no course work in addictionology in American medical schools. We have got to make sure that we work with the academic community and the medical community to be prepared in a comprehensive way for each new drug that comes down the pike so that we can nip it in the bud in a particular community through treatment programs that are specific to that drug, through after care programs that provide balance, through a focus by building a database on who the distributors are and taking them out through effective law enforcement action that sends a loud message.

If there is clean up involved as there is in methamphetamine enforcement, let us make sure that we development comprehensive efforts to do that. Let us develop prevention programs that are comprehensive. But if we do it piecemeal, if we think we are going to solve problems just by going after this drug organization or that drug organization, it is not going to have an effect unless we look at the whole picture.

As I mentioned, in Boston, Mayor Mannino called me and he said, "Something is happening, General." If you have not met the Mayor, the Mayor is vintage mayor.

[Laughter.]

Attorney General Reno: "We need some help. The crime rate is starting back up again. I talked to the police commissioner. He said you talked about reentry programs last fall, and I said that is not going to be a problem for us, but it is starting back up again. We have got to do something."

And we see reentry programs being established across the country either through reentry partnerships or reentry courts, but you have got to look for the danger signals so that it suddenly does not overtake you before you can be prepared to deal with it. And so the information has got to go hand in hand with what we are doing in the field.

Is it a new organization? Where did it come from? Suddenly, your databases, the information that is available is clear that something new is happening. Rather than just wait and react, you have got to get in there, develop the intelligence, consult with the community, find out what it is, and take it out before it gets a hold of the community.

But ladies and gentlemen, the greatest single challenge you will face as you implement in the first five sophisticated developments and strategic approaches, and as the new five develop approaches, you have got to recognize that this economy may not last forever. It could be a miracle economy, but I am not sure.

And what happens when the economy starts lagging, and what happens to jobs that are now available, and what happens to young people who now see hope for the future? That is going to be one of the great challenges that we face.

How do we face it? Let us use this brass ring right now and grab it, and hold on to it for as long as we can to get our young people into the mainstream of the job world, and into the mainstream of community and trade in the economy.

But let us be prepared and understand that we can find solutions if we work hard enough. Be prepared to understand that communities change. Do not take anything for granted. That chief executive that is so wonderful, that has volunteered so much and has been so supportive of summer programs, may get transferred, may retire, and the corporation assumes a whole new entity. The chief of police may get promoted to a larger jurisdiction or retire.

You have constantly to be on the alert for changes in the partnerships, and adjust, and make allowances for each. Use some of your resources. Prod the United Way. The United Way has such structures in many communities that can focus on youth violence. Follow up with them. Make sure that you involve them. And

Smith said, get the Urban League to the table, but listen to us. Do not just bring us to the table for the show of it. It is so important that we listen with a listening ear to what people are telling us.

There is such a tendency to go out and say, these are the things that we should be doing. I have to watch that tendency. Go out and listen to the people in your community.

Make that community safe enough so that that old lady who used to give everybody a piece of her mind, but now has withdrawn behind her door because she is frightened, make sure that she feels safe enough to come down to the community and continue to give people a piece of her mind because she can be a tremendous force for good. She can push those young people along. She can make a difference.

Talk to groups like Habitat for Humanity. In Jackson, Mississippi, I saw Habitat take on a whole neighborhood rather than just one house. I saw a community and a municipality balance that neighborhood need for restoration of housing and demolition of some of the housing with community services and municipal services of roads, police, and fire. I saw a community being recreated right before my eyes.

If you have got as part of the data that is so important, a clear understanding that there is one ward, one precinct, one neighborhood that is in dire straits in terms of physical infrastructure, think about how you change it for the better.

I got cut off as I was listening to people with great ideas. I would like to ask you all a question rather than talking anymore.

If you were the Attorney General of the United States, what would you do in the three and a half months you have remaining, to support whatever you are doing that is bringing communities together, developing strategic approaches, using information, involving the academic community, solving problems, giving communities hope for the future?

What would you do to support it both in the three and a half months I have remaining, and then when I get in my red truck and start across this country to see what is being done and what I can do to support it?

So with that, let me start hearing from you. And you are not all that silent. If those from the new five communities have questions or ideas, I would love to hear from them especially.

Mr. Ozan: Good morning. I am Peter Ozan, Chief Counsel to the United States Attorney in Portland and the SACSI coordinator.

Madame Attorney General, I think that what I would urge you

to do is continue to highlight reentry. I think this is -- as your department has already highlighted, the approximately 600,000 offenders who are coming out of the institutions annually really pose a huge threat to public safety in the country. And I think the public needs to know that, and I think it is an opportunity to really think smart about public safety by dealing with these offenders, getting them ready to return to the community.

So that would be my recommendation, highlight reentry and transition.

Attorney General Reno: I thank you for that because I could not agree with you more, and I would be interested in some of the strategies.

We have got to make sure that we give -- I find that so many coming out, want to get off on the right foot, but do not really seem to know how. And if we can start in prison by providing job training, developing aptitudes, identifying aptitudes, and making sure that we link with the community, we can make a difference.

If churches, NGOs, private not for profits, or even police officers assume responsibility for somebody as they are going in for five years, and keep in touch with them in prison, I think that can do so much. If we build relationships with their family, particularly with their children, that can be extremely helpful.

If we provide the drop-in or the 24-hour service that they need for just a phone call of, "Help, I am slipping. Give me some help. Give me some support," it can make a difference.

If police officers can learn to work with young people or even the 35-year-old who is coming out after 10 years in prison, identifying how you work with them to give them a chance to get off on the right foot, it can make such a difference.

I would be interested in the policing thoughts as to

whether there have been any initiatives that you have thought were successful in terms of reaching out to people returning from prison, and trying to form communication systems and relationships that serve law enforcement well.

Mr. Ozan: We have today, Madame Attorney General, our Portland Police Chief and the Oregon State Director of Corrections. And we really, in our project in Portland, really see most of the offenders -- high risk offenders returning to just a few neighborhoods in Portland which is true across the country.

So we are really fashioning those partnerships to get people from the community, probation, parole officers, and police officers into these prisons, up to 120 days before release, working with the inmates, confirming their plans in the community, and really seeing that as a big step to advanced public safety.

And again, with your national audience, I think you can really communicate to the public that this is in their interest to get these folks ready.

Attorney General Reno: Thank you, and we will continue that effort because I believe in it so strongly.

Dr. Kellerman: Madame Attorney General, I am Arthur Kellerman, Atlanta, Georgia. I am the token physician in the room. And I would --

Attorney General Reno: Never token, Dr. Kellerman.

Dr. Kellerman: Yes, ma'am.

[Laughter.]

Dr. Kellerman: What you said this morning needs to be said as loudly and clearly as possible to the entire country. It is difficult in an election season and not have that sound like a campaign slogan, but instead of preaching to the choir, the choir needs to be singing with you to everybody else in the country about the phenomenal accomplishments

that have been made in responding to violent crime in this country in the past six, seven, eight years.

We all know what happened between 1985 and 1993. In Fulton County, Georgia, youth homicide increased 500 percent during that period of time. We peaked in 1993. We are moving down at a very steady and gratifying rate.

As a doctor working at Atlanta's Level II Trauma Center, I am seeing fewer dead and critically injured young men today than I saw four or five years ago.

But I do not know that we -- we, everybody in this room and our colleagues around the country, have communicated the fact that that was not simply an economic swing. It was not an accident. It was not a random event, but is the result of the kinds of partnerships, and practical strategies, and problem solving solutions that you and your department, working in concert with everyone in this room have achieved over that period of time.

And if that mind set, that collective commitment is going to survive any administration, we have to convince the electorate and we have to convince our citizens, our fellow members of our communities, that that philosophy needs to go forward, and not be seen as owned by any particular attorney general, any particular administration, but in fact, needs to be in the very fiber of how we deal with crime and violence in this country.

Attorney General Reno: Let me make two points, Doctor. First of all, what I have tried to do is approach it from the point of view that this is not a Republican or a Democratic problem. This is: We are all in this together.

And it has been gratifying for me to stand with Republican sheriffs, and Republican mayors, and a Democratic U.S. attorney as we announce new programs and new partnerships.

And I have the sense from the Conference of Mayors, and the League of Cities, and the National Association of Counties, that those officials understand that and appreciate it.

I point out that community policing started as a Democratic initiative. Weed and seed started as a Republican initiative. We take the best and we do problem solving.

I am going to do everything I can as I leave office and afterwards, to make sure that this approach, which is not one single person's approach, is carried on in a thoughtful, careful way.

But let me point out something to you, in very cold January, at the first meeting of the U.S. Attorneys, the Center for Disease Control presented statistics that were extraordinarily shocking to me. It was a comparison of youth violence in this country with youth violence in the rest of the world and youth violence as it affected young men, young black men, as victims and as perpetrators.

And I resolved then to do everything I could because I came to Washington in my confirmation hearing saying that youth violence was one of the single greatest crime problems we face. I think we have faced it, and I think we are making progress.

But what is so important is to recognize that there are new partnerships, not just those that we have talked about in terms of law enforcement, but of law enforcement in the public health system.

Domestic violence has been an epidemic in this country. Law enforcement is not going to solve it by itself. We should make sure that in every community in America, the doctors, the OB/GYN, the pediatricians, the family physicians, have as much information in their waiting rooms and in their clinics on domestic violence, shelters, where you should go, what you need, where you get a restraining order, as there is with respect to other diseases or situations that the medical community is confronting.

Preachers should be talking from the pulpit about the fact that you do not beat your wife. And the community should be spreading that word. As immigrants come into this country, and suffer from domestic violence because they are afraid

that they will be deported if they report it or because it is culturally okay.

We have got to take action in working with the archdiocese, do something about it. We can do so much if we look at it as with the faith community, with the medical community. We can work together to solve these problems.

And the same is true with respect to youth violence. Now there was one statistic that has really surprised me in that early presentation. That is that most youth violence arose from situations involving alcohol, not drugs. I challenge the medical community to do more in terms of dealing with what we do about alcohol and adolescence, both in our whole country and with respect to Indian country.

And that is something that I hope we will not neglect in our strategic approaches. We have got to do far more in Indian Country to build our responses to ensure that we meet our trust responsibilities. But I wish you all would get cracking on alcohol and do something more about that.

Dr. Kellerman: Yes, ma'am.

Attorney General Reno: By the way, while some of you, the representatives have higher education, if you have got a law school degree, figure out how you can get a combined degree in public health, criminal justice, and law, and satisfy all the bar examiners and everything else. We create lawyers and they go down their little pig trail --

[Laughter.]

Attorney General Reno: -- and they know how to do transactions, and they know how to prosecute a case, but they do not know anything about problem solving.

Audience Member: Ms. Reno, I am Director of Corrections that Peter Ozan was talking about.

And I think on each one of the tables there is a very small handout about what Oregon is doing, but I think in terms of

partnerships, and in Oregon, at least, I believe what we are doing is really all about partnerships, and the success of making those relationships that last longer than those chief executive officers or the influential people in them.

But I really encourage all of you. I do not know how much you all have worked with your corrections division in each state, but it is one of the few times in the lives of many offenders where they are in the position to actually be treated to learn, to work, to do a number of other things that really count.

And that little document that we handed out, I think, is -- we would really invite anybody to call. There are some phone numbers on there of the people that are really pivotal to making this work. And it is a group in Oregon of about 250 people from 50-plus agencies that are working on the whole business of reentry and transition.

And the reality is that in our state, at the very least, we believe that begins the day they come into the prison system. You have to plan that incarceration. You have got to have programs and activities in place that mitigate the problems that got them there initially.

And I am very pleased, we were asked by U.S. Attorney Chris Olsen and Peter Ozan and others to join this group, and I think it is important for the future of all these cities that are looking at this as a new initiative to engage those people.

Thank you.

Attorney General Reno: And I think you all are leading the way. Have you talked to your colleagues in Massachusetts?

Audience Member: Ms. Reno, we have not. We have, quite frankly, spent all of our energy the last couple of years building prisons to meet the demand of longer sentencing in our state.

And we have been on this initiative now for about a year

and a half, along with some incarceration planning and better assessment and intake. But I have mentioned, I will be involved -- I was at NIC yesterday working with their strategic plan on working with reentry issues as well.

Attorney General Reno: I had the occasion to talk to the Massachusetts Commissioner, and he sounds very much like you in terms of his commitment, and the more we can bring people together.

But I think you raised a point that is very important in terms of preparing them through aptitude testing, through job training, placement, development of life skills. Any data that we can get -- and there is some good data out there -- to form a strong positive support for Pell Grants in prisons would be, I think, very important. And I am beginning to see some of that data and would like anything that you can provide us that would be helpful in that regard.

Audience Member: Certainly. And I would agree with you and help make that point that the data driven decision making is really the most effective tool. We have spent a lot of time in public safety.

I have been in this business since 1970 with a lot of anecdotal information that does not get us very far. And I am one of those converts away from that to really looking at the data and making decisions based upon that. But, again, thank you for the information.

Attorney General Reno: I also discovered that I can make the data say anything I want to if I get lazy.

[Laughter.]

Attorney General Reno: One of the important things is to take, look at the data, and if it tells you something you do not want to hear, listen to it even more closely. When it shows you that you are not succeeding, do not ignore it. Follow through, try to understand what we can do to address the issues.

Ms. Smith: Attorney General, I would like to suggest that if you could send a letter out to our corporate partners, and appeal to them that they must change their attitudes about giving people who have been incarcerated another opportunity.

I think that is one of the stumbling blocks, and I do not know whether we even have corporate representatives around the table here. But, if we have left them out as a partner, it has been a mistake.

Attorney General Reno: Well, here is what we are trying to do. If we can figure out, as I mentioned earlier, how we reach out to a great segment of our population that has got smarts, skills, but they are hiding it under their bushel basket, and they have gone off and said, "I do not want anything more to do with you," if we can bring those people along, make sure that they have skills, show that corporate world that here are some skills that they can truly benefit from, that, look, in the commissioner's prison is a person with this aptitude, this skill, he is coming back -- he is coming back to your community, sooner rather than later, far better that he come back working within your company, becoming a part of your company, than tearing your company down from outside.

And I think there has been some fascinating work done on these corporate employers and anybody employers, whether they be corporations or whatever, but we tend to forget where people are situated. We have people in an inner city and the corporation is outside, and the person from the inner city cannot get to the outside.

But if we do things located near the job pool, and provide this training for the job pool, we can be smart. And this is the time to do it, ladies and gentlemen.

Just from common sense, people cannot find enough nurses now. They cannot find enough teachers now. I have a 44 percent vacancy rate in IT jobs in one part of the Justice Department. The FBI is looking for people with skills. This is the time to do it and get these people into the

mainstream.

And I just urge you because it is out of corporate necessity that they are going to do it, Ms. Smith, more than anything else. But I have been writing, and I will continue to, and if you have got some targets for me, let me know.

[Laughter.]

[Pause.]

Attorney General Reno: There has got to be other things that I can do.

[Pause.]

Attorney General Reno: I cannot be that perfect.

[Laughter.]

Attorney General Reno: I just want to thank you. For seven and a half years, I have had the chance to work with some wonderful people. U.S. Attorneys of this country and those represented here today, or who are here today, are some of the great people that I have worked with, that I have ever known.

The career people and their office are pretty extraordinary. And it is wonderful to see some of those career people serving as U.S. Attorneys now and doing such an incredible job, the people in the Justice Department.

I have, for those of you who come from different communities, a special, special mission, and that is to let the people of the United States know how many dedicated men and women work with them and for them throughout the Justice Department across this nation.

But then I had a chance to go to communities, to see people in action, to see people who care, to see people who will come from Portland here and Albuquerque here when they have

more than enough to say grace over at home.

And I am just so -- I will leave this office with greater faith in, more wonder at the people of America. People say to me, "How can you put up with public service for that long? You just get cussed at, fussed at, and figuratively beaten around the ears."

There has been nothing like this job to give you faith in the American people, and their desire to do right, and their desire to make a difference.

A man stopped me the other day. He had stopped me two or three times before because I live near the Justice Department building and walk in the neighborhood.

And he says, "I am the man that sleeps on your grille. I have not been there for a while, but I just want to see how you are doing."

He talked, as he had done before when he had stopped me. This man has such insight. He is well spoken when he wants to be. He can contribute. He can make a difference. But that man has made a difference to me because he supports me and he says we are on the right track.

And then there is another I have got to work harder on. I was in an area looking at old buildings and just seeing how the neighborhood was changing, and three men were on the corner. One was sitting on his bicycle, and they first see the FBI with the wires in their ears, and then they say, "Oh, there she is. Ms. Reno, I want to talk to you. I just got out of prison after 19 years. Will you buy me a sandwich?"

"I left my purse at home, sir."

"That's okay. I still love you."

I said, "Can I talk to you?"

"Yes."

I said, "What am I going to do to keep you from going back to prison?"

And he said, "Do not worry about me. I am too far gone. But see that rundown building over there? You ought to get that rehabbed and made into a neighborhood center, and get these kids off this street corner right now."

We have got work to do with that man. He does not have to go back if he has the instincts, if he has the thoughtfulness because we then talked, and finally, he reached over, gave me a big hug, and pedaled off.

Winston Churchill said that how a nation treats its people who have been in the criminal justice system, who have committed serious crimes, after they have paid their debt to society, is the measure of the strength of the civilization in which we live.

Those of you who represent your communities, state and local law enforcement, higher education, and those people that just care, there are so many of you out there. Do not think that you are alone. Figure out how you can reach out and bring the forces of this nation together. And we have a signal opportunity.

Guns have killed too many people in this nation. All you had to do was listen to Dr. Kellerman's figures. We do not have to put up with gun violence.

Toronto has about the same demography as Chicago, about the same size. In a five-year period in the 1990s, Chicago had 3,060 gun homicides. Toronto, similarly situated, had a little over 100.

This nation should rise up as one and say, "We are sick and fed up with this." Let us enforce against those that possess guns illegally. Let us go after the drug organizations and other organizations that permit their proliferation through the communities. Let us develop partnerships, if you will, but let us demand of gun

manufacturers that they work with us to ensure that guns are distributed properly within communities.

Let us make sure that people are trained and licensed so that they know how to safely and lawfully use the weapon and have the capacity and the willingness to do so.

We have done things like this before. This nation rose up. It took us a long time, but the civil rights movement showed what this nation can do when it gets its act together and understands what the right is, and how to move.

This nation has done it in another issue in terms of smoking. A different type of issue, but when this nation starts looking at what needs to be done, it can begin to move.

It started looking at what we were doing to our environment. We have got a long way to go, but we are doing it.

Certainly, with guns, we can work with others in moderate, but fierce determination to see that guns do not kill any more. I hope that all of you in the five senior strategic approach jurisdictions and the five new ones will work with your communities to say we can really do something to solve a problem such as guns that kill our young.

But there is another thing. We have neglected two discussions, and they are going to come in and hit us from all sides: Elder abuse and neglect. Just about the time we solve the problem of youth violence, we are going to see -- unless we take action now in this country, vigorous action, we are going to see a proliferation of abuse and neglect of our elderly that will be an epidemic, if it is not already.

I urge you in your communities to put that up on the board as something that requires action both in terms of prevention, enforcement, and appropriate corrections.

The other is that the guns that I just referred to can become passe when we look at what cyber criminals can do

halfway around the world in terms of stalking and other oppressive efforts aimed at our liberty and our privacy.

Put that up on the board, and figure out how we take those young men who are headed for prison now and pull them back, take those young men that have been in prison and bring them out, and discover their cyber aptitudes and get them into the mainstream.

In short, you cannot focus on just one thing. You have got to focus on communities and on people. But I give you some hope, as somebody who has had a chance to really see the American people in operation, particularly those in this room. We can do it.

Thank you all for making me believe.

[Applause.]

[Whereupon, at 9:32 a.m., the speech was concluded.]