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1994 MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS CONFERENCE
HENRY FORD MUSEUM AND GREENFIELD VILLAGE

Dearborn, Michigan
Monday, May 23, 1994

The Honorable Janet Reno

1 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you
2 and Chairman Ford for a wonderful opportunity to
3 visit this magnificent museum.

4 I have a special mission. I used to
5 watch my Congressman go to Washington every two
6 years, run for office, serve his constituents day
7 in and day out over a 30-year period, and I never
8 knew how difficult the job was until I came to
9 Washington and watched people like Chairman
10 Dingell and Chairman Ford deal with extraordinary
11 complex issues, such diverse issues, and still be
12 so in touch with details, with the facts, the
13 law, and the process and procedure; you're very
14 fortunate in these districts to have two such
15 distinguished public servants, and I'm honored to
16 be here with them today.

17 When I came to Washington a little over
18 a year ago, I was worried that I would lose my
19 sense of community. I had served for 15 years in
20 the community where I was born and raised. I
21 knew the people, I knew the neighborhoods, I knew
22 police officers in the different departments, and
23 I wondered what it would be like to come to
24 Washington.

25 I resolved that I would try not to lose

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1 my sense of community, but now I've got a lot of
2 communities, and it is so important for me to
3 keep in touch with groups such as all you, who I
4 think are on the front line of the critical
5 issues of America today.

6 I think as we look at what has
7 happened; with the Depression, we began to look
8 to Washington for solutions to our problems; with
9 World War II, we became more convinced that
10 Washington was the place that our problems were
11 going to get solved; and then with the Civil
12 Rights efforts for the '50s and the '60s, we
13 looked to Washington for justice. In the '70s
14 and early '80s, we looked to Washington for
15 money, and then we started seeing programs
16 shifted to the states without funding, and then
17 the states shifted programs to the communities
18 without funding.

19 America's communities, large and small,
20 with their backs up against the wall are doing
21 some incredibly creative and innovative things to
22 address the problems of crime, to address the
23 problem of how we get our children to grow in a
24 strong and positive way.

25 Mr. Chairmen, I congratulate you both

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1 on having the foresight to have an annual
2 conference such as this. It comes to the heart
3 of where government is happening in America
4 today, and I think it speaks for the partnership
5 that we are trying to develop between Washington
6 and the communities throughout America.

7 I worried as a prosecutor in Miami when
8 the federal government came to town; too often
9 they came to town telling me I could have a
10 grant, but no, sorry, you can't have that grant
11 because you can't meet these conditions, because
12 your circumstances are a little bit different; or
13 they came to town telling me what to do, because
14 they thought they knew my community better than I
15 did.

16 What I have tried to do is develop a
17 new partnership with state and local law
18 enforcement, a partnership that is based on a
19 two-way street. I think our first effort has
20 been to make sure that the federal agencies
21 within the Department of Justice work together.
22 Too often different federal law enforcement
23 agencies didn't know what the other was doing,
24 they didn't exchange information, they had a
25 proliferation of task forces that didn't produce

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1 a coordinated effort.

2 And with a new director of the FBI,
3 Louie Freeh, the Administrator of the DEA, Tom
4 Constantine, the United States Marshal, Eddie
5 Gonzalez, we've developed a really great
6 partnership. People who have been in law
7 enforcement in Washington for some years now say
8 they've never seen the agencies working together
9 better. We're sharing intelligence between each
10 of them. Systems are being coordinated;
11 automation, training, are being coordinated so we
12 don't have costly redundancy, so that we work
13 together and we get the most effective return on
14 our dollar.

15 We're trying to get agents out to the
16 field from behind desks in Washington, and trying
17 to make a difference by reaching out to local law
18 enforcement through the U.S. Attorney's office,
19 through the various agencies, to form a real
20 partnership with law enforcement throughout this
21 nation.

22 We have a long way to go, but I am
23 gratified when I come to areas such as the
24 Detroit area and talk to local law enforcement,
25 begin to hear their problems, but recognize that

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1 we are making some progress.

2 It is clear to me, and was clear before
3 I came to Washington, that crime is the number
4 one problem in this country, particularly youth
5 violence, and we now have an historic opportunity
6 to do something about it.

7 I think America wants a common sense
8 discussion of crime. I don't think they want it
9 done in 30-second sound bites; they don't want
10 promises that can't be fulfilled; they want a
11 program that means something. And I think to
12 that end, if we can get a crime bill passed that
13 is balanced, thoughtful, and means what it says,
14 we can make a significant difference.

15 The crime bill as it goes into
16 conference this week, has three important prongs;
17 first of all, punishment. As a prosecutor,
18 nothing is more frustrating than to prosecute a
19 dangerous criminal, get him convicted after
20 trial, after avoiding an unwarranted plea
21 bargain, get an appropriate sentence imposed, and
22 then see that person out in a shorter time than
23 anticipated because there are not enough prison
24 cells.

25 We need to provide dollars to state and

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1 local correction agencies throughout this country
2 that can ensure the appropriate detention and
3 imprisonment of those that deserve to be
4 imprisoned, and do so for the length of time that
5 judges are sentencing them.

6 The bill in its various forms I think
7 as it goes into conference will do just that, and
8 will provide a substantial and direct allocation
9 of resources where it counts, because as we look
10 at the problem of violence, I think it is
11 imperative that we all recognize, and I want you
12 to know how much I understand, that the problem
13 of violence is basically a state and local
14 problem.

15 Police officers in communities
16 throughout America are on the front line. We
17 need to back them up by sharing information, by
18 working with them, by providing backup, by
19 exchanging automated results of examinations. We
20 can do so much if we work together, but you in
21 law enforcement are on the front lines and need
22 our support.

23 But even as we provide -- as we go into
24 conference and anticipate that we will provide
25 direct support, it is also important that we

1 understand that there are a lot of people in
2 prison because they've got a drug problem, and
3 nothing makes less sense than to send somebody to
4 prison for a burglary, knowing they have a drug
5 problem, and then find them out in three years
6 without drug treatment, without job training and
7 placement, back to the community where they
8 started to get into trouble in the first place,
9 to the apartment over the open-air drug market
10 where the problem started, and expect that
11 they're going to do anything but start committing
12 another crime about the time they get out.

13 The bill, in both provisions, both the
14 House and the Senate provisions, provides for a
15 drug court concept; providing for treatment,
16 providing for a carrot and stick approach that
17 says look, you're going to be punished or you can
18 work with us in terms of treatment, you can
19 successfully comply with the treatment program,
20 we'll work with you in aftercare and follow-up,
21 and if you successfully complete and remain drug
22 free after random drug testing over a year
23 period, we'll get you off to a fresh start and
24 avert this case from the system.

25 Programs like that are working

1 throughout the country now, and the bill in both
2 forms will provide for direct grants to state and
3 local government to enhance and to expand drug
4 courts throughout the United States.

5 But it is clear, as I indicated at the
6 outset, and from my meetings with various law
7 enforcement officials in Detroit in these last
8 several months, it is clear that youth violence
9 and youth crime is one of the single greatest
10 crime problems we face. I think it is imperative
11 that young people know that they are going to
12 face a punishment, that there is no excuse for
13 putting a gun up beside somebody's head and
14 hurting them, and that they are going to face a
15 punishment.

16 When I go to schools throughout this
17 country, youngsters are asking me: How come that
18 kid commits a crime and then is back on the
19 school grounds by the next day? Police officers
20 are asking me: Janet, you've got to do something
21 about these guys; they just think they can get
22 away with it. They laugh at the juvenile justice
23 system.

24 The crime bill again in both forms
25 provides for direct grants for youthful offender

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1 facilities and boot camps that can let youngsters
2 know that there is a sanction, a fair, firm,
3 appropriate sanction that means what it says if
4 you commit dangerous, violent crimes.

5 But as importantly, there are offenders
6 being sent off to youthful offender programs now,
7 but have ended up right back in the community
8 without aftercare, without addressing their
9 educational deficiencies, without continuing to
10 address drug problems when they come back to the
11 community, and the kids are just committing
12 another crime as soon as they come back to the
13 community.

14 The bill provides for aftercare
15 programs, that include both continued drug
16 treatment, job training and placement, and ways
17 and in a manner that can give kids a chance to
18 get off on the right foot and lead a positive and
19 constructive life.

20 A second foundation to the crime bill
21 is the provision for community police officers.
22 Just in the Detroit area, I have had now the
23 chance to visit with programs where community
24 policing is working. You in law enforcement know
25 better than I do what community policing is all

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1 about. It can take different forms, but what it
2 basically means is what I call good,
3 old-fashioned policing; where police officers
4 know the residents in the community, where they
5 involve the residents, including young people, in
6 developing priorities and identifying problems
7 and in coming together to forge common
8 solutions.

9 I had great experiences with community
10 policing programs in Miami, and I wondered what
11 the experience around the country was. Now that
12 I have had a chance to travel, I see an exciting
13 effort underway in almost every major area that I
14 have visited.

15 Citizens are developing a trust in
16 their police that once they did not have. When I
17 go to a South Central Los Angeles to an
18 elementary school in a very difficult area, 40
19 percent African American, 40 percent Hispanic, 20
20 percent Cambodian, and I ask the little kids what
21 they want to be when they grow up, they look over
22 my shoulder and point to the community police
23 officer and say: I want to be a policeman.

24 When I go to South Dallas, a young
25 woman tells me that at first she thought police

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1 officers were her enemies, but with community
2 policing, getting to know the police officers in
3 that community, she now sees them as her mentor
4 and they're her ally.

5 What I see happening in America is one
6 of the most exciting developments I have seen in
7 law enforcement. Police officers are becoming
8 the instrument of healing in the community.
9 Communities so desperately want to be safe so
10 they can come out and start working together
11 again, and it is the police officer who is on the
12 cutting edge of making that happen.

13 When I see youngsters come to the Great
14 Hall of the Department of Justice to tell the
15 President of the United States what their
16 community police officer has meant to them in
17 terms of mentoring; when I see elderly citizens
18 come out to a town meeting and tell me what their
19 community police officer has done in terms of
20 getting the bad guy out of the community, getting
21 him to prison, and making a difference for the
22 community, it is one of the most exciting things
23 that I have sensed in law enforcement in some
24 years.

25 The bill will provide dollars for

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1 community policing. We're trying to work with
2 state and local officials to make sure that it
3 goes to communities in ways that you can truly
4 use it. We're trying to make sure that there
5 will be opportunity for collaboration between
6 suburban towns, or small cities, so that they can
7 link together.

8 Most of all, I don't want us trying to
9 dictate to you how it should be used. I would
10 rather you, understanding the problems of Detroit
11 and the suburban areas, put it together in ways
12 in which you say look, this is what we want to
13 use it for, this is how we want to be
14 accountable, measure us accordingly; hold us
15 accountable, but let us try to do it the way best
16 suited for our community.

17 The bill also provides a very important
18 focus on domestic violence. When I first took
19 office in 1978, it was very difficult to get
20 judges and police officers and prosecutors to be
21 interested in the problem of domestic violence,
22 and yet I did a study of people killed in Dade
23 County over a 25-year period prior to that time;
24 40 percent of the cases reported at the Medical
25 Examiner's office during that period were related

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1 to domestic violence; husband/wife,
2 boyfriend/girlfriend, ex-spouse.

3 We developed a domestic intervention
4 program, and slowly people came to understand how
5 important it was to focus on domestic violence.
6 The FBI estimates that it is the most frequent
7 crime in America, occurring once every 15
8 seconds.

9 When I was in Iowa recently, I was
10 involved in a fiber-optic hookup with 15 towns
11 and cities in Iowa, some very rural. They had
12 met for an hour beforehand to discuss the
13 priorities for that town or community. Eight of
14 the 15 listed domestic violence as one of their
15 priorities. Because you in the communities of
16 America understand that unless we start focusing
17 on violence in the home and doing something about
18 violence in the home, we are never, ever going to
19 be able to end it in the streets and in the
20 schools of this nation.

21 Programs include the development of
22 domestic violence courts and one-stop centers
23 where battered women can go to get the help that
24 they need to break the cycle of violence. This
25 bill will provide for support and assistance for

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1 such programs and can make a significant
2 difference in changing the way we think about
3 domestic violence, so that we understand that the
4 criminal justice system working with the medical
5 community can do so much to interrupt what is
6 being handed down from one generation to
7 another. The child who watches his father beat
8 his mother comes to accept violence as a way of
9 life, and now there's sufficient documentation to
10 indicate that we must change it at that point if
11 we are to stop that cycle.

12 But when I took office in 1978 as the
13 chief prosecutor, I tried to focus on the
14 juvenile justice system, believing that it was
15 important to do something about crime before it
16 really became confirmed in a person's life.

17 I soon realized that if I focused on 16
18 or 17 year olds after they had been adjudicated
19 delinquent, after they've dropped out of school,
20 after they've fallen behind, after they've become
21 the drug dealer's gofer, I would never have
22 enough dollars to deal with all children 16 or 17
23 similarly situated.

24 So we looked at causation and saw
25 direct causation between delinquency and dropouts

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1 and we focused on a dropout provision program in
2 the middle school. That became clear to me that
3 that was too late. Already by that age group
4 kids were dropping out, they were dropping out
5 because they had already fallen two grade levels
6 behind and they were acting out in other ways to
7 attract attention to themselves.

8 We started focusing at police officers'
9 instigation on early neighborhood intervention
10 programs that surrounded Head Start. Because
11 police officers who knew their neighborhoods were
12 telling me: Janet, you've got to start earlier.
13 We're never, ever going to be able to do it if we
14 wait until middle school. We've got to start
15 earlier, because you can see the problems
16 developing along the way.

17 And at that point, the crack epidemic
18 hit Miami, and the doctors took me to our public
19 hospitals to start focusing on what we did with
20 crack-involved mothers and their infants, and I
21 became -- it came clear to me that we must focus
22 on giving children a strong and healthy start.

23 That's a separate issue that the
24 congressmen are dealing with in terms of health
25 care, in terms of expansion of Head Start, but

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1 the crime bill provides an historic opportunity
2 for prevention programs that can work and can
3 make a difference.

4 When I talk with kids and when I talk
5 with police officers about what's needed in terms
6 of prevention, they tell me again and again,
7 something for the kids to do afternoons and in
8 the evenings. One of the most frustrating things
9 in the world is to go to a commission meeting
10 where the community is asking for a new youth
11 center, and then turn and drive passed a school
12 that's closed at 4:00 in the afternoon. The bill
13 will provide for monies to -- direct grants to
14 states to keep schools open in the afternoon and
15 in the evening through the Ounce of Prevention
16 Program. That can make a significant
17 difference. It provides for coordinated efforts
18 of police, parks, teachers, social workers,
19 business people, everyone coming together in a
20 partnership in the community.

21 But it used to frustrate me when I was
22 in Miami when I tried to develop these programs.
23 I would go to the Department of Justice or the
24 Department of Health and Human Services or
25 Education or Labor, and one didn't seem to know

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1 what the other was doing, and they sometimes had
2 duplicated programs and didn't seem to coordinate
3 their efforts in the best way possible.

4 Shortly after I came to Washington, I
5 arranged a meeting with the secretaries of HHS,
6 Education, Labor, and HUD and the Department of
7 Justice, and sat down together and started
8 forming a coordinated effort, not having any
9 regard for turf, but having a regard for how we
10 used our dollars as wisely as possible.

11 I think if we work with you, with local
12 communities throughout this nation, in filling in
13 the gaps in your community, and trying to utilize
14 federal programs so that they meet your needs to
15 provide sound programming for our children
16 afternoons and in the evenings, we can make a
17 significant difference. We can make a difference
18 through mentoring programs that are working
19 throughout the nation by expanding those programs
20 and making sure the youngsters have somebody who
21 can follow them, supervise them, and understand
22 their needs.

23 We can do so much in terms of conflict
24 resolution programs that are working again around
25 the nation and need only to be expanded, teaching

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1 our children how to avoid conflicts with knives
2 and guns and fists and to solve their problems in
3 other ways.

4 The bill also contains a significant
5 provision, the House bill, for the President's
6 Yes Program, the Youth Employment Skills Program,
7 that focuses on jobs for our troubled youth, jobs
8 that can make a difference. Not make work jobs,
9 but jobs that link aptitude and interest with
10 afternoon programs, with summer job experiences,
11 with employment opportunities that can give our
12 young people a chance to grow in a strong and
13 positive way.

14 This is an historic opportunity as we
15 go into Congress. I think it can make a
16 significant difference. 100,000 police officers
17 on the streets of this country will be
18 extraordinarily important, but you police chiefs
19 in this room know better than anybody else how
20 important it is that we do not hire too rapidly,
21 that we hire in the right way and that we train
22 in the right way, and that takes time.

23 It is important that we get this bill
24 passed as soon as possible so that the processes
25 and the procedures can be in place to move

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1 forward and to work together with communities
2 throughout America to make a difference.

3 One of the biggest problems I have as I
4 say all this is, I can link with one community
5 and with another, but what I -- people say how
6 can you link with all the communities of this
7 nation? I think that is one of the great
8 challenges that we face, but it has been so
9 rewarding to me to have the opportunity to visit
10 with people, to take questions, to try to shape
11 the actions of the Department of Justice based on
12 the real needs of police officers, of mayors, of
13 people who are on the front line, and so many of
14 this nation's critical issues here in your
15 communities and throughout this nation.

16 Mr. Chairmen, I thank you both very
17 much for this opportunity to be here and I would
18 be happy to take questions or comments or take
19 some notes about what I need to do.

20 CONGRESSMAN DINGELL: We have just a
21 few minutes before the Attorney General has to be
22 whisked away to the airport, and she did want to
23 respond to questions. Who has a question?

24 QUESTION: Miss Attorney General, we
25 have a problem in our area down here, we have to

1 do so much advertising and screening, that is
2 unaccepted by just the department, that my
3 understanding is that all the tests that we have
4 given in the past, along with Allen Park and
5 Dearborn and so many other cities, it is not
6 being accepted, and we've been put through hoops
7 under this consent judgement for the last five
8 years, and I'm just wondering when is it all
9 going to end so we can hire some police officers
10 in our cities?

11 MS. RENO: What I would like to do is
12 get your name and chat with you just a moment
13 afterwards, get the details and follow up and get
14 back to you.

15 CONGRESSMAN DINGELL: I can get that
16 for you. I used to be the city attorney in his
17 town, and the prosecutor, and I know every cop on
18 the beat because they all went to high school
19 with me over there.

20 MS. RENO: Let me tell you one of the
21 things that I'm trying to do, because I watched,
22 again, the federal government set down standards
23 and I didn't understand those standards all the
24 time. What I'm trying to do in the Civil Rights
25 Division, and indeed at all of the offices in the

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1 Department of Justice, is come up with a
2 statement about what is expected, put it out so
3 people understand it, explain it, work with
4 people, seek compliance so it's done the right
5 way without lawsuits, and then if people
6 obviously disagree with me, we can litigate that,
7 if they thumb their nose at me, we can litigate
8 that, but I think that in most instances, people
9 want to work these things out, to do it the right
10 way, to avoid the litigation. I will follow up
11 with you.

12 QUESTION: We had a brief program, it
13 was Riverview Recreation Education Appreciation
14 Program, there were three school board members,
15 three city council people, and they had a
16 chairman. They kept the schools open and they
17 had family nights, and all that has gone by the
18 wayside, but it used to charge a quarter or fifty
19 cents to get in, and the families paid and they
20 played basketball and there were swimming pools,
21 and they used that money to donate to one of the
22 booster clubs, and it worked very well, but it's
23 not in place anymore. I think it should come
24 back into place.

25 MS. RENO: One of the things that was

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1 so moving to me as I went through the museum this
2 morning was to see what Henry Ford had done
3 within 10 or 15 years, and then he sometimes got
4 complacent, I understand, and things -- or not
5 complacent, he just thought he had done it all
6 right and excellent and there was nothing more to
7 be done.

8 I think one of the points we must
9 remember is that we can go back and start looking
10 at the way things were done before. The
11 automatic shift -- the transmission, the whole
12 process by which we started revisiting what had
13 been done before and expanding on it now. We can
14 draw so much from the past, but we must not rest
15 on the past, we must move ahead to new and
16 innovative programs.

17 Part of it, ladies and gentlemen, is
18 just common sense. If you look at most of the
19 children that are at risk, they are either the
20 children of single parents who are working, who
21 do not have time to be with them in the
22 afternoons, they are the children of parents who
23 are indifferent or not supervising them, and if
24 we can give kids an early opportunity at
25 supervision, at structure, it can make such an

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1 extraordinary difference. Wherever I go in this
2 country, it makes a difference. When you talk
3 about involving the family in it as well, it is
4 even more important.

5 Part of what we must do as we approach
6 this problem of crime is focus on it from a
7 common sense point of view and not get caught up
8 in labels, but just figure out how the best way
9 to do it is, and let's get it done, and we've got
10 a chance to do that with the crime bill.

11 QUESTION: (Inaudible).

12 MS. RENO: I don't think there's any
13 doubt about that, but I think one of the things
14 they we've tried -- that we've done, at least I
15 as a prosecutor saw it, and I can't comment on
16 Michigan's situation; each state is different,
17 and I don't pretend to be an expert on Michigan,
18 so take it with a grain of salt, because this is
19 a Florida view.

20 We would promise stiff sentences.
21 Florida started enacting minimum mandatory
22 sentences for all sorts of crimes back in the
23 late '70s, early '80s. We developed sentencing
24 guidelines in '83. We talked about tough
25 sentencing, but there weren't enough prisons to

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1 go with it; so people were sentenced to a very
2 short period of time, 20 to 30 percent of the
3 sentence, or they would be sentenced, having a
4 drug problem, and they would be cycled in, cycled
5 out, without the drug problem being treated, or
6 they came from an absolutely grave situation that
7 put them at risk when they returned, and there
8 was no aftercare and follow up.

9 Again, it's a matter of common sense.
10 There are some people that belong to be put away
11 and kept away, and I think we're letting too many
12 of those out, but we're sending too many there
13 for brief periods of time and sending them right
14 back without addressing the problems in the first
15 place, and I think if we use common sense and
16 just start figuring out, okay, how are we going
17 to prevent this one from doing that again, then
18 follow up and meaning what we say, we can make a
19 significant difference.

20 QUESTION: Madam Attorney General, I'm
21 the mayor of a host community to a federal
22 prison, Milan, but we're a nation of small
23 cities. In Michigan, for example, when you get
24 to the 100th largest city in Michigan, that's a
25 city of 8,000 people. So often we see the

1 federal programs for enforcement and drug
2 education are for cities larger, 25,000 and
3 above, and yet it's very difficult for us to
4 either participate, because of our location, or
5 to receive those funds because of the size and
6 cutoffs on the federal programs.

7 Do you see anything happening, and
8 crime is moving into our communities. We had a
9 police officer murdered in our community three
10 years ago, so it's not an isolated incident
11 anymore, the gangs, the crime, the drugs, they're
12 finding safe havens in our small cities of our
13 communities in our country, and we're very
14 concerned about that and we wondered if that's
15 being addressed.

16 MS. RENO: That is one of my principal
17 concerns. So that you know, I have a personal
18 watchdog; my sister is the county commissioner in
19 a small Florida county, and she tells me that all
20 the time; so she's going to make sure that I
21 don't forget the small communities, indeed the
22 rural areas of America, because what I have
23 observed is just what you described.

24 Urban centers are seeing in many
25 instances a slight reduction in violent crime,

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1 but what's happening is it's spilling out,
2 spilling out in the suburbs, around the urban
3 areas, and that's the reason I want to be as
4 flexible as I can in administering the Department
5 of Justice so that I meet the needs of the
6 suburban areas as well, so that we meet it in a
7 coordinated way, and that we focus on rural
8 areas.

9 It is very important, one of the major
10 problems is making sure the dollars get to those
11 areas, and I'm trying to work with the National
12 Sheriff's Association, the International
13 Associations of Chiefs of Police, to make sure
14 that the bill is drafted in a way that can truly
15 meet that need.

16 In the police hiring supplements, which
17 we have just finished distributing, we took
18 particular care to make sure that we focused on
19 small areas, rural areas. We tried to provide
20 them with grant assistance, because they might
21 not have the grants -- great grant rider. We've
22 tried to do everything we could to make sure we
23 meet the needs of the smaller American
24 communities.

25 And on all of these things, if you

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1 think I fail, I want you to let me know. You can
2 always let me know through the chairman's office,
3 or pick up the phone and call me. Somebody
4 said: You won't return my phone call. You would
5 be surprised.

6 QUESTION: I totally agree with your
7 position that it's so critical for us to start
8 working with the young families and the young
9 children. As I go around talking to people and
10 trying to get that across, they're not
11 interested, the general public, because they're
12 not educated to the need for that. They're
13 interested only in locking up prisoners and
14 building more prisons.

15 Somehow or other, I think it is
16 important for us to mount an educational program
17 similar to what was done on smoking and tobacco,
18 starting with the federal government and maybe
19 filtering through all levels of government.
20 Certainly I think everybody in this room agrees
21 with your position, but until we can really
22 educate the general public as to the need for
23 this, and the difference it will make, that we
24 will be saving human resources, many of these
25 people that are locked up are extremely

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1 intelligent, and they have never had the
2 opportunity to do what would help them.

3 Do you look at a possibility of that
4 kind of program being started at the federal
5 level and really going through all of the
6 government?

7 MS. RENO: I tried to start it in my
8 own way, because I came to Washington very
9 suddenly and very unexpectedly. I came after the
10 president had been sworn in, after the cabinet
11 had its first meeting, and there was nobody there
12 to say this is what you do as Attorney General.
13 So I started doing what I had done in Miami,
14 not -- I'm not blowing my own horn. I'm just
15 talking about political realities.

16 I've been talking about the same
17 balance between punishment and prevention for a
18 long time, and I kept getting reelected. If you
19 put it -- too often people just say: It's just
20 punishment, or it's just prevention. I say it's
21 not labels, it's common sense; yes, that bad guy
22 has got to be locked up, and I'm dedicated to
23 doing that; but if you talk in terms that people
24 can understand, it is amazing to me how the
25 American people have come to understand it more

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1 and more in just this year. At first people
2 said: What is that Attorney General, she sounds
3 more like a social worker than a prosecutor, and
4 what they didn't realize is that it was police
5 officers and sheriffs and everywhere I went, when
6 I started talking about it, the sheriffs and the
7 police officers who are on the streets, who see
8 what's happening, were chiming in.

9 The American Medical Association
10 started seeing what was happening to its health
11 care institutions. It's a ground swell, but the
12 important thing is people want the bad guy locked
13 up, and there are too many instances where the
14 bad guy is getting out in some jails across the
15 country. So rather than an either or, a
16 balanced, thoughtful common sense approach, a
17 statement: Yes, this person needs to go to
18 prison, but it's not going to do any good just to
19 spend all the money on prison if he's going to be
20 out in three years without a job, without a
21 skill, without having his drug problem addressed,
22 going back to the open-air drug market where he
23 got into trouble in the first place. Americans
24 understand that.

25 Employers are beginning to understand

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1 that unless we start to make an investment in
2 children, they are not going to have a work force
3 with the skills necessary to operate the
4 tremendous technology that we have in this nation
5 today. We have got -- we've been investing in
6 smoke stacks and factories and automation and
7 technology, and now I think America has got to
8 invest in its most important capital, and that's
9 people, and that's where we fail.

10 For too long we've done crisis rather
11 than prevention. We've built the prisons rather
12 than make an investment a lot cheaper up front.
13 We've built health care institutions rather than
14 invest in preventative medical care. I think
15 most Americans understand that if you put it in
16 those terms.

17 CONGRESSMAN DINGELL: I'm afraid we're
18 going to have to cut it off to get her to the
19 airport.

20 MS. RENO: I'm doing all right.

21 CONGRESSMAN DINGELL: One more
22 question.

23 QUESTION: This morning I attended the
24 seminar, and the State Police spoke about 14,000
25 arrest warrants they had out for potential

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1 fugitives, along with -- what was it, Wayne
2 County, Oakland, Macomb; I wondered, is there
3 enough money in your crime bill to put these
4 people through the court system, and once they
5 get these 14,000, of which I think they said
6 they've got 500 already, and to house these
7 people and get bond signed up so they don't hit
8 the streets the next day?

9 MS. RENO: I think this is one of the
10 issues, and that's the reason it is so important
11 that we get the dollars for the punishment and
12 direct grants to state and local governments.
13 But one of the things I have found in community
14 policing is very interesting. The good community
15 police officer can go into the neighborhood, or
16 go into a problem area, and working with the
17 neighbors, he can identify the bad guys and the
18 ring leaders, and then bringing in other law
19 enforcement detectives and the like, they can
20 break up that ring and that gang.

21 There will be a little bunch of
22 peripheral hangers on, and you can draw them
23 back. It is both getting after the bad guy and
24 getting them put away, while at the same time
25 pulling the others back. But there's also the

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1 importance of getting these warrants served, and
2 one of the things that has troubled me for too
3 long, the marshal service did its own fugitive
4 apprehension, the FBI did its. If we coordinate
5 again with local law enforcement in developing
6 the priorities, we can make a difference as to
7 who we focus on for arrests in terms of career
8 criminals and the major traffickers.

9 There's so much that we can do if the
10 federal government will be a true partner with
11 local law enforcement, and if we can get you the
12 dollars in terms of prisons and jails and
13 policing and prevention, that can make a
14 difference, because you -- you're the ones that
15 are on the front line and need the resources as
16 well.

17 (Luncheon concluded at 2:00 p.m.)

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