

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

PRESS CONFERENCE

WITH

U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO

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White House Conference Center

Washington, D.C.

P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. CAMPBELL: Good morning to all of you. My name is Bonnie Campbell and I am the Director of the Violence Against Women Office at the Department of Justice. We are wonderfully happy to have you here today.

We've been working on this day for longer than I care to tell you because we truly believe that we have unprecedented opportunity to make a difference in the lives of many women who are victims of violence.

It is my pleasure to introduce the woman for whom I work. She is, first of all, more knowledgeable on these issues than literally anybody I have ever met. So it is an awesome thing when I have to go brief here, like on what?

And maybe even more importantly, she is completely committed to doing something that really matters in the lives of victims. Without saying all I could say about her that would be glowing, it is my great pleasure to introduce the Attorney General, Janet Reno.

[Applause.]

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: We are dedicated in this administration to doing everything in our power to fight violence against women. And today we are joined by 41 distinguished leaders and activists, including ministers, mayors, people who have been concerned about domestic violence and family violence for so long, police officers, business leaders. It is so exciting to see the range of people who are willing to give their time and energy to a cause that I consider so important.

They will help us energize this nation, its cities, its towns, its small counties, its industry, the people and spread the word that we are going to fight violence against women and sexual abuse in this country in every way that we properly, possibly can.

These 41 individuals are going to speak out across the country in their profession, in their community, and in every way they can to spread a message. The message is clear. That we no longer can turn away from violence against women

and pretend it doesn't exist.

[Applause.]

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: That the criminal justice system, that the medical community cannot do it by itself. That in order to prevent this type of violence, communities and the people have got to come together and work together and become involved in prevention efforts. And that people in neighborhoods must speak out against this violence and let everyone know that it will not be tolerated.

In 1994, a bipartisan majority of Congress authorized critical funds to both the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services so that at long last we could assist states and localities in prosecuting offenders and in protecting women who have been or are at risk of being abused or sexually assaulted.

I know what it was like to be on the front lines without those funds and try to make a difference. They can make such a critical difference to work now going on in the community.

But now, some in Washington talk about reneging on that commitment and turning back from that commitment. Now, House appropriators want to cut approximately two-thirds of the funds authorized for this initiative next year. This is simply unacceptable.

We promised America's women real help, not just talk. Now, we have got to deliver with funds for millions of women and families that have suffered, for shelter, for counseling, for training for law enforcement--all of which is so desperately needed throughout this country.

Some argue that we can't afford to live up to our commitments. I say we cannot afford not to. We must move ahead. And we are. We are moving forward in implementing President Clinton's Crime Act with the appointment of Bonnie Campbell and I take issue with her. She knows a lot more about the subject than I do.

We created the Violence Against Women Office and she has done a wonderful job in these first days of bringing leadership to this area.

She is recognized as an expert in this area from her experience and we are so delighted to have her in the Department.

The Department of Health and Human Services will fund the Family Violence Hotline for battered women and families to call in to seek assistance. Just this month the Justice Department announced the first round of grants that will be used for police training programs, public education materials, and in improved communication and data collecting systems. Approximately \$26 million was distributed to the States and Territories.

And now, today, we take this important, wonderful step forward. Both Secretary Shalala and I are very grateful to all of you who have agreed to join the Advisory Committee and to serve as advocates and as experts across the country to give meaning and vitality to the Violence Against Women Act.

Today, for the first time, we bring together many disciplines--law enforcement, the medical community, educators, business leaders,

clergy and community activists--working together with our friends and neighbors, with members of our profession, with members of the business community where we work, we can help break the cycle of violence that has scarred so many women across this country.

We can break the cycle of violence that is spilling out into the streets. For the child who watches his father beat his mother comes to accept violence as a way of life. This is a way that we can start truly and effectively intervening in the violence that is wrecking the lives of our youth in America.

But we won't stop there. This advisory committee is about results, not reports. We will keep moving forward and take our momentum to every State, every community in this country. We are going to meet every six months and we are counting on the talented men and women to come back to us with concrete ideas, not just in six months, but at every point along the way, so that all of us can act upon these ideas to add to the progress we have

already made.

We have waited far too long to take meaningful steps against domestic and sexual violence. The wait is over, action has begun. And I am so proud and pleased that you all would join us in this effort.

[Applause.]

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I would like to introduce now a person that I have come to admire as much as anyone that I have had the opportunity and the privilege to work with in Washington and the person probably, not probably, but most responsible for the Violence Against Women Act. A great leader in the Senate, and a very great human being, Senator Joseph Biden.

[Applause.]

SENATOR BIDEN: Thank you, very much.

You have done one hell of a job since you have taken over this office not only on the violence against women, which I will speak to in a minute, but in everything.

You have restored a sense of integrity and

certainty to the office. I have been here for six presidents and probably 35 attorney generals, and I am proud to work with you.

And the best thing you did in my view so far is picking Bonnie Campbell and I am not joking about that. You know, we spent a long time trying to pass this legislation. When I sat down six years earlier and drafted it and no one paid much attention to it, I went to Vince Poppitti, the Chief Judge of our Family Court in the State of Delaware--I am going to be a little parochial here--and sought his help on what the law should say, what the proposed law should say.

And when we got along the way, Scott Harshbarger, from Massachusetts, I went to and asked for help. And he helped. And when things started to get real tough, there was a woman in the Senate who decided that not only was her husband supportive, but she was going to take over, and Sheila Wellstone here became a tigress. It was absolutely almost embarrassing on occasion how tough she was with my colleagues to make sure that

they did not back off of their commitment. And, Sheila, I think we have to send you to the House right now.

Attorney General, you all were not part of the legislation, but I think you may turn out to be the most important part whether or not this legislation means anything. Because this Council, or whatever you all are going to be called, you are all opinion leaders in your States, you all are going to make a difference whether or not we make a lie of the commitment that was made by everyone. Every Democrat--and I'm not nearly as bipartisan as the Attorney General or the President is--we keep talking about this being a bipartisan piece of legislation. We got seven Republicans to vote for it, that is bipartisan as hell.

But everyone is now saying they are for it. Everyone now goes around their State beating their chest about how important this is. Now, let me make something real clear to you. Your job, in my view, is going to be to make sure that the public understands what this commitment was and how

it is being reneged upon.

In the House of Representatives, there have been two votes in the appropriating committees. I will not confuse everyone with all the jargon here, but the bottom line is they are reneging on the commitment. And it is the House Republicans that are reneging on the commitment. Everybody talks about the House. As a member of the Senate, I get very angry when I hear that the Senate did this or the Senate did that, and I did not do what is being said.

The fact of the matter is you all have your work cut out and I would respectfully suggest the first thing is to make sure you remind everyone of the commitment they made.

We are not talking about one new penny in taxes here to deal with this God awful problem this country faces. We went out and cut 272,000 Federal jobs. We took 272,000 bureaucratic paychecks and put them into a trust fund. The money is there. The money is there. Not a single new penny in taxes.

And, in case you think I am getting exercised about it, I am. I am angry. I am angry because now what has happened is that they have cut the funding so badly if it continues we will have 60,000 women, who next year, and their families who would be able to go to a shelter to seek protection, they will have now place to go. That is 60,000 individuals.

We will be in a position, if these cuts are to be maintained in the House of Representatives, where we will have a hotline that women can pick up and call but once they get the hotline they will have no help on the way.

And so ladies and gentlemen, rather than go through the remainder of my prepared text, let me just say to you something very basic, very simple.

It took us six years to get here. It took us six years of bipartisan support and to give you the whole support, the whole picture in this, the Senate Republicans are with us on this. Orrin Hatch, a co-sponsor of this bill, has signed a

letter with me and sent it over to the House Republicans saying, what in God's name are you doing to this commitment you made? Bob Dole was considering doing the same thing.

In the Senate I hope and pray it will be a different story, but the bottom line is, folks, don't let anybody tell you when you look at this, you are not spending one additional tax dollar. You are not raising one single solitary person's income tax one cent by keeping this commitment. Don't let them take our money and spend it on something else, whether it is a tax cut for the wealthy or a new bomber or a worthwhile social program.

The commitment has been made and it's our job to make sure the commitment is there, because let me tell you something. Maybe because I am so identified with this thing and of all the few things I have ever done in my public life, the thing I am most proud and most committed is this piece of legislation.

And without exaggeration, every place I go

in my State or out of my State somebody comes up to me, and you will find they will come up to you, as you get identified with this, and you will have the most unusual experiences. A well-dressed woman in her mid-50s will walk up to you and say, thank you, thank you, very much. Some poor woman, who is working as a waitress in some diner, will walk up to you and say, thank you, thank you, very much. Because for too long this blight on America's character has been hidden and we are uncovering it now. We are uncovering it and as a famous justice once said, "Light is the best disinfectant."

And the best disinfectant is for the nation to speak up and talk about this and then for us to follow through and give the necessary help without any new tax dollars to help these people.

So I strongly, strongly, strongly encourage you to make sure you have something to advise about, something to advise about for if we do not maintain this commitment that we made in terms of the dollars that have been promised we will have broken faith with the tens of thousands

of women out there that know about this. They know about this. This has resonated. This is out in the community. They understand. They think help is on the way and if it does not come we will break faith in a way that we have not done so directly in a long time.

So, please, please, the first step, help our friends on the House side, who are in the name of budget-cutting--and I will give them the benefit of the doubt that they may not know what they do--but let us explain to them that what they have done is fundamentally inconsistent with what they say they are for.

So please help. With guys like Scott and Vince Poppitti and many of you on this committee, some of whom I know and some I don't, I am confident that you will be not only a significant addition to what else this legislation should do and how it should be implemented, and how we can help women, but we got to make sure the money is there first. This is the first round. If we get the funding, which is no new tax dollars, if we

keep the trust fund and keep the faith then you will have something to implement over the next six years.

If you don't, you will get to come to Washington and have a lot of social contact with one another but not be able to do a whole hell of a lot.

Thank you, very much.

[Applause.]

MS. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Attorney General Reno and Senator Biden. You should hear him when he really gets wound up on this issue.

[Laughter.]

MS. CAMPBELL: I have, and it's a great pleasure.

It is also a great pleasure now for me to introduce the members of the Advisory Council on Violence Against Women. I want to begin by recognizing the ex-officio members. I am one of them, I am Bonnie Campbell.

The next person I would like to introduce, just a little humor here, a little levity. One of

our interns said you should introduce him as your partner in crime. I decided that it might be better to introduce him as my partner solving crime. Joe Brann, who runs our community-oriented policing services office and he's doing a great job.

[Applause.]

MS. CAMPBELL: And from the Department of Health and Human Services Susan J. Blumenthal, MD, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, Women's Health and Assistant Surgeon General.

[Applause.]

MS. CAMPBELL: Peter B. Edelman, counselor to the Secretary.

[Applause.]

MS. CAMPBELL: Who we hope will be arriving soon and when she does we will appropriately introduce her.

But I must say that as hard as I know all of us have worked to make this day happen, we are really placing a very heavy burden on all of you and you were so kind to agree to it, because I do

think you all knew that when you agreed to serve on our council.

So it is a great pleasure for me to ask you, each, as I call your name to come up here and stay up here because you get to answer questions from the media, as well.

We are in alphabetical order, lest anybody wonder. Gail Abarbanel, Director of the Rape Treatment Center in Santa Monica. I called on Gail many years ago and she gave me good counsel and we are delighted to have her here.

Larry A. Bedard, MD, Chairman of the Advisory Committee for the American Medical Association Campaign Against Family Violence.

Carl C. Bell, MD, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University Illinois School of Medicine.

Alana Bowman, Supervising Deputy of the Domestic Violence Prosecution Unit of the LA City Attorney's Office.

Reginald K. Brack, Jr., Chairman of Time, Inc.

Lem Burnham, Ph.D., Director of NFL
Players Program of the National Football League.

Did Judge Burstein arrive? Yes, good.

The Honorable Karen Burstein, former New York State
Family Court Judge.

Carol A. Cartwright, Ph.D., President of
Kent State University.

Jerome A. Chazen, Chairman of the Board of
Liz Claiborne, Incorporated.

Vickii Coffey, Executive Director of the
Chicago Abused Women Coalition.

Ellen R. Cohen, Executive Director of the
Houston Area Women's Center.

Susan Dey, Actress, and advocate and kind
person who got up real early with me this morning.

Linda A. Fairstein, Chief of the Sex
Crimes Unit of the New York County District
Attorney's Office.

Rev. Doctor Marie M. Fortune, Ph.D., of
the United Church of Christ and Executive Director
of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and
Domestic Violence.

Kathryn Walt Hall, Executive Vice
President of Hall Financial Group.

My former colleague and good friend, the
Honorable Scott Harshbarger, Attorney General of
the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Honorable Paul Helmke, Mayor of the
City of Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

Joan A. Kuriansky, Founder of My Sister's
Place, and former Executive Director of the Older
Women's League.

The Honorable Cindy Lederman, President-
Elect of the National Association of Women Judges,
and Circuit Court Judge from the Eleventh Judicial
Circuit of the Juvenile Division of Dade County,
Florida.

Brian Kenjii Ogawa, Ph.D., Director of the
Victim Witness Assistance Division of the
Department of the Prosecuting Attorney.

Ruben B. Ortega, Chief of Police of the
Salt Lake City Police Department.

The Honorable Vincent James Poppitti,
Chief Judge of the Delaware Family Court, and

Chairman of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council.

Roberta Cooper Ramo, President-Elect of the American Bar Association.

Jerome R. Rossi, President and Chief Operating Officer of Marshalls, Incorporated.

Susan Schechter, my good friend from Iowa, Clinical Professor at the University of Iowa School of Social Work.

Esta Soler, Executive Director of the Family Violence Prevention Fund.

Norman H. Stamper, Ph.D., Chief of Police of the Seattle Police Department.

Sarah Torres, RN, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Community Health, Psychiatric, Mental Health and Nursing Systems of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Marvin L. Van Haaften, Sheriff of Marion County, Iowa, a man with whom I have spent many hours working on these issues.

Rosalyn Weinman, Ph.D., Senior Vice

President of Broadcast Standards and Practices for NBC.

Sheila Wellstone, Advocate Extraordinaire.

Ann Landers was unable to join us for the press conference but will be attending the rest of the day. You will probably all recognize her.

Additionally, the following people have agreed to be part of the Council, but unfortunately have not been able to attend today's meeting.

They are Sarah M. Buell, Assistant District Attorney of the Norfolk County District Attorney's Office.

Honorable Jane Campbell, Ohio House of Representatives and President of the National Council of State Legislators.

Catherine O'Reilly Collette, Director of the Women's Rights Department of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees.

Linda Gordon, Ph.D., Florence Kelly and Villas Research Professor of History at the

University of Wisconsin.

Joyce Ladner, Ph.D., Interim President of
Howard University.

Wilma P. Mankiller, former Principal Chief
of the Cherokee Nation.

Robert E. McAfee, MD, President of the
American Medical Association.

Rebecca W. Rimel, RN, President and Chief
Executive Officer of DePeu Charitable Trust.

Louis W. Sullivan, MD, President of the
Morehouse School of Medicine.

Susan L. Taylor, Editor-in-Chief of
Essence Magazine.

Now, I think I saw the Secretary come in.
I want her to get a proper introduction. I have
been a fan of Secretary Shalala's for probably more
years than either she or I would like to discuss
with you and the speech you gave recently on
domestic violence brought tears to my eyes. I want
all of you to meet the Honorable Donna Shalala,
Secretary of Health and Human Services.

[Applause.]

SECRETARY SHALALA: Thank you, very much, Bonnie.

[Applause.]

SECRETARY SHALALA: I apologize for being late. It was the President.

My press statement everybody has in their packet. Let me just say two things. With this assembly of extraordinary citizen advisors this Administration and this town declares that domestic violence, domestic terrorism is no longer a private issue.

Second, the Attorney General and I want to make it very clear, along I know with Senator Biden, that we got bipartisan support on this legislation and that we will not let them take the resources away that will fund this nation's strategy.

[Applause.]

SECRETARY SHALALA: The Attorney General and I have long been considered the Mutt and Jeff of this Cabinet, but in this case we have an opportunity to chair an extraordinary panel and it

will be a very dynamic duo, so let's get to work.

Thank you, very much.

[Applause.]

MS. CAMPBELL: Thank you.

I see Senator Biden hiding, but this is the point at which we get to be, as Gregory told us, interrogated by the media. And so I think he ought to be here and we will go right into that.

Question?

QUESTION: Ms. Reno, how do you respond to criticism, generally Republican criticism, that even though domestic violence against women is pervasive, even though it is a problem that has to be dealt with, it is a local problem that should be dealt with locally?

SECRETARY SHALALA: Let me say that the criticism by those in the other party is exactly the opposite of what they said when they supported and gave bipartisan support to the Violence Against Women Act, and so we are asking them to be consistent and to keep their promises to the American people to fund the programs as they

promised.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: But more importantly, crime is a local issue, but it is a national issue, and the promise they made reflected a national commitment against violence against women.

It reflected an attitude of this nation, a stand of this nation. It is a matter that crosses State lines. We have had the opportunity recently to prosecute a case that probably could not have been handled by one State or another. It is a matter that affects this entire nation and requires a national commitment.

SECRETARY SHALALA: Other questions?

QUESTION: What are some of the specific programs that you are talking about for funding here? Specifically how will that trickle down in its effect on women?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: We have already, as I indicated, announced grants of \$426,000 as a beginning, as a downpayment on this commitment to every state in the nation. It is so exciting to

see what the States are proposing, shelters for battered spouses. It is so terrible to see a woman come to my office, as they did in Miami, and say, I can't go forward with this. I have no place to go. I have got to go back. The shelters are so critically important in helping to interrupt the cycle of violence.

It will provide training programs for police agencies. The Chiefs here can tell you how important it is for police officers to be trained on how to handle these matters. They are both dangerous to police officers, and a sensitive, thoughtful police officer can oftentimes be one of the most effective tools in intervening in the cycle and in getting people to go forward with the prosecution or with prevention programs.

It will help communities to innovate new ideas, such as domestic violence centers, which Judge Lederman, here, has been instrumental in bringing people together around a court that can be so effective.

There are so many programs and new ideas

that we hope to hear about that emerge from States and local communities who take advantage of these dollars in creative, thoughtful, and bold ways.

SENATOR BIDEN: Can I speak to that very briefly?

It will do very basic things. As 60,000 women will not get to go to a battered women's shelter. This guy out in his State and in his city set up a pro-arrest policy which worked. It means that if you show up on a scene and a woman is bleeding and a man is standing next to her and it is obvious that a crime has been committed, if there were two men they would arrest them both. But what you do now is you say, would you like to swear out a charge against this 6' 1", 220-pound guy? And you arrest, arrest on information. They will not be able to have the money to do that.

They will also not be able to have the money because of the significant cuts made by the House if they stick, to do things like we have put in the bill a requirement that when a kid goes into that circumstance, a child who is victimized by his

mother being battered into a courtroom, special advocates are assigned. It costs money to have those people.

They cut that out. They cut out everything except the hotline. And that is \$400,000 for a hotline. Who the hell is going to answer the phone? They are not going to have the money to have people answer the phone.

And, so folks, once this happens, this is very basic gut stuff, not bureaucratic malarkey, this is real simple things. When a women is in trouble she needs to know she can go some place. We made a promise there would be a place to go. The Republicans and the Appropriations Committee said we are not going to fund the place for her to go.

We also said, once you are in that situation, we will get you out of the situation. We will provide and train police as special units, we will give these folks back home the ability to do that. We are cutting that money out if they prevail. It is very, very basic, nuts and bolts

things. There is no philosophical underpinning that is being tampered with. It's real simple.

These guys all promised. They promised and they said they care about this. They said it is a national problem. They voted. They all jumped on it and said, let me co-sponsor your legislation. They went back home and put out press releases, and damnit, they better fund it.

[Applause.]

MS. RAMO: I am Roberta Ramo, the President-Elect of the American Bar Association and I wanted to respond to that question in another specific way which also relates to the Federal Government issue.

We can't have national media campaigns without giving women a 1-800-number that every woman in America knows. And the difficulty is that in many communities there are shelters but it is difficult, often, to find the numbers. Women in a terrible crisis situation can't remember them, can't find them and we can't do the kind of national media campaigns that we want without a

hotline. It's as simple as that.

We need a number that is something like 1-800-Stop-Hitting-Me, that everybody knows and without the Federal Government help, as the Senator indicated, without enough money to keep the hotline going it is a false promise.

QUESTION: There are a couple of issues that [inaudible] up there. I would like to see what they have to say about the consequence of not getting the additional money. You don't have it now, what were your anticipations for your being able to use it and what will be the consequences in a community if the House Republicans prevail?

MR. STAMPER: I would be happy to respond to that. I am Norm Stamper from the City of Seattle. And 85 percent of people surveyed in a Journal of the American Medical Association article or research indicated that they would talk about domestic violence to their doctor. Slightly less than 85 percent indicated that they would talk about domestic violence to a pastor, to a priest, to a rabbi. And very few of these women, and the

offenders in those domestic violence cases indicated that they have confidence in talking to the police.

We need massive assistance to be able to provide education and training for every one of our police officers to sensitize them to the problem and to provide the skills necessary to build public confidence and credibility in law enforcement.

MR. BRANN: My name is Joe Brann and I am the Director of the COPS Office. In response to that question, we did a survey here about six or eight weeks ago of all the COPS jurisdictions we have funded around the country. There are 6,600 of those. Out of those 6,600 what we found is domestic violence was identified as the second most pressing issue that law enforcement agencies are facing across this country.

I think that that very directly tells us how this is perceived in the law enforcement community and what a priority that they place upon that.

SECRETARY SHALALA: I think that we need

to get to work, Janet, so why don't we end the press conference, and we will see you all as we have results and other things to say.

[Whereupon, the press conference was concluded.]