

1 REMARKS OF HON. JANET RENO,
2 ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
3
4
5

6 Monday, September 11, 1995

7 10:25 a.m.
8
9

10
11
12 New Castle County Superior Court

13 1020 King Street

14 Courtroom 301

15 Wilmington, Delaware
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

1 (Speech beginning at 10:25 a.m.)

2 Your Honors, this has been a very special
3 morning for me, and I would first like to congratulate
4 those who graduated today and wish you well.

5 Each time I come to a program such as this,
6 whether it is at my home in Miami or here today in
7 Wilmington, when I see what people can do, the strength
8 of the human spirit, what you can do when you set your
9 mind to it, what you can do with people who care and
10 support you and advise you, it is really a great tribute
11 to the human spirit, and I wish you all well. And to
12 those still in the program, we're waiting for you. You
13 can do it!

14 People have told me long before I first talked
15 about Delaware that you have a sense of community here,
16 and it is so marked in this courtroom this morning, to
17 have two judges who care not just about the lawyer, but
18 the people behind the law and what the law means to
19 them. And what can be done, how it can be used is so
20 important.

21 To see the Chief Justice here with Senator
22 Biden, Congressman Castle, to see the state legislature
23 represented, the Attorney General, the public defender
24 -- I was real glad when I walked in here and saw that
25 the public defender was here. That's an example again

1 of how people can come together. And it shows
2 Republicans and Democrats, prosecutors and public
3 defenders, judges, legislators, mayors, everybody
4 working together can make a difference. It is a sense
5 of community that is so important. Delaware may be the
6 smallest, but you are an example for the rest of this
7 nation of what can be done when people of goodwill come
8 together and address a problem. And here this morning
9 is a classic example.

10 Senator Biden, thank you for making sure that
11 I knew how important Delaware's example was, and thank
12 you for all that you have done to help spread the word
13 about drug courts.

14 As Judge Gebelein said, drug courts are not
15 really new, they are old-fashioned; they are the law and
16 judges and people working together to help the people
17 overcome. We have got to carry forward in this effort.

18 Today we are awarding over \$6 million to 13
19 communities across the country, one of which is the
20 Superior Court of Delaware.

21 (Applause.)

22 To implement drug courts or to enhance
23 existing drug courts, these 13 awards mark another step
24 forward in implementing this important program which was
25 authorized by the 1994 crime bill. We made tremendous

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.

(202)289-2260 (800) FOR DEPO
1111 14th ST., N.W., 4th FLOOR / WASHINGTON, D.C., 20005

1 strides in using the tools of President Clinton, Senator
2 Biden gave us a year ago, when the President signed the
3 crime bill into law. The crime bill operates on common
4 sense, policing, punishment, prevention, programs that
5 work, that have been proven and that make a difference.
6 And that's why I'm so pleased to be here today, to help
7 show the American people what we can do when people on
8 the front line are given the tools to do the job.

9 Now, sometimes I come and I announce a grant,
10 and it's a grant to implement a program. I come here
11 today with great confidence, because I come here to
12 announce a grant that can expand a program that you see
13 working this morning, that you've seen working in
14 Delaware for the last 17 months. This is not a promise
15 of something to happen, this is a promise of something
16 happening now.

17 A few weeks ago, I announced that the Justice
18 Department had given planning grants to 52 communities
19 involved in developing a drug court. We have provided
20 the money to help them get started.

21 The implementation grants we're awarding today
22 are for jurisdictions that are committed to the
23 drug-court concept. They know who will be appropriate
24 clients; the first offender, the nonviolent offender,
25 the substance-abusing felon. And there are many

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.

(202)289-2260 (800) FOR DEPO

1111 14th ST., N.W., 4th FLOOR / WASHINGTON, D.C., 20005

1 participants, all of whom you see reflected here today,
2 that are already committed to working together. Five
3 jurisdictions will receive these grants, ranging from
4 \$650,000 up to a million dollars.

5 Another eight communities which have already
6 established drug courts will receive enhancement grants,
7 ranging from 195,000 to \$650,000. These grants will
8 help to improve their delivery of services and their
9 ability to coerce abstinence amongst drug-abusing
10 offenders.

11 I am pleased to announce that the Superior
12 Court of Delaware is receiving over half a million
13 dollars as part of this grant.

14 (Applause.)

15 From my vantage point, Delaware's court is
16 unique, and you moved ahead of where we were, because
17 you were also not only willing to focus on first-time
18 offenders, but those offenders for whom traditional
19 sanctions did not work. As you pointed out, Judge, that
20 can be a slow process, a frustrating process, and
21 sometimes you think you are taking three steps back, as
22 I suspect that you sometimes did, but then you continue
23 working together to move forward. What is the
24 alternative? The alternative is for people to go to
25 prison once and again and again and again. And that

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY, INC.

(202)289-2260 (800) FOR DEPO

1111 14th ST., N.W., 4th FLOOR / WASHINGTON, D.C., 20005

1 costs money, a lot more money than these programs cost.
2 It means that human lives are wasted; human lives that
3 we see can be put to such marvelous advantage.

4 Thank you for caring. Thank you for being
5 willing to work on the hard cases who are so important
6 and who can mean so much to all of us.

7 Last year, I was fascinated to learn that one
8 quarter of 5,000 cases in New Castle County were drug
9 cases. This grant now will allow the court to reach
10 hundreds more defendants, and allow them to expand the
11 drug court statewide to Kent and to Sussex County. It's
12 not just our major metropolitan areas that deserve help,
13 the problem of drug abuse in this country is spread
14 across this land in rural counties and major
15 metropolitan areas. So many of our citizens, especially
16 our young people, have serious substance-abuse problems
17 that are linked to criminal behavior, so many of them
18 repeatedly cycled through our courts, our corrections
19 program, our probation system, costing us every step of
20 the way.

21 Drug courts break this cycle, and save people
22 in the process.

23 People have caught hold to the idea, because
24 there are now currently over 50 drug-court programs in
25 operation throughout this country. We have got to make

1 sure that these programs are strengthened and expanded.
2 In passing the crime law, the Congress recognized that
3 while some communities have been able to start up their
4 drug courts, it wasn't always easy. I know when I
5 started trying to work with the public defender, with
6 the judges in Dade County who started drug court, it
7 couldn't have been done without some federal monies, the
8 partnership which we talked about. I know that our
9 federal resources coupled with the drive, determination,
10 and dedication of local professionals can really begin
11 to get at the heart of the problem.

12 Drug courts are emblems of what I call the
13 old-fashioned carrot-and-stick approach. These programs
14 include mandatory periodic testing and drug treatment,
15 increasingly stronger sanctions, including jail, for
16 those who fail to take advantage of the opportunity
17 afforded to them.

18 We don't want to just send these rehabilitated
19 offenders back into the community, though, not without
20 the tools they need to do the job, and it is so
21 important that we provide the aftercare, the follow-up,
22 the support that these people will need as they come
23 back to the community. Taken together, the supervision
24 up front and the aftercare, the job training, the
25 placement, the family support, sometimes a 24-hour hot

1 line can make such a difference in terms of people
2 resisting the urge to relapse. They help offenders
3 learn responsibility and transition back to communities
4 where they can lead productive lives.

5 We have been working hard to preserve this
6 important part of the crime law program, but it is now
7 in jeopardy. Unfortunately, the revision bill passed by
8 the House this fiscal year ended up cutting the drug
9 court program in half. So, this year, we have had far
10 fewer grants than we would have had and would have hoped
11 for.

12 The future looks even bleaker. Despite the
13 President's request for full funding, as authorized in
14 last year's crime bill, the House has voted zero
15 funding, recommending that drug courts compete for
16 block-grant program funds. I hope that the Senate will
17 do the right thing by restoring funding for drug courts
18 like this program you see here today. We want to give
19 people the tools they need to bring community resources
20 together, to bring what resources the federal government
21 can direct to a program that has been proven
22 successful.

23 Drug courts give us hope that we can do
24 something constructive and long-lasting in helping those
25 substance-abusing offenders get off to a fresh start.

1 We need to do this for them; but, more importantly, for
2 us, as we watch what drugs do in terms of crime in this
3 nation, as we watch wasted lives and healthcare costs
4 and children whose future is impaired as a result of
5 drug abuse.

6 In closing, I would like to congratulate the
7 graduates again and wish you well, and say to those in
8 the program, we are with you every step of the way. God
9 bless you.

10 (Applause.)

11 (Speech concluded at 10:36 a.m.)