

15 I want to thank everybody that has been here.
16 The
17 energy that I felt last night the sense of, yes, we can
18 make
19 a difference, the sense that this is an extraordinary
20 challenge, but we are making a difference in our community
21 and in our program. And what we are doing is just
22 infectious, and I want you to know how important your work
23 is and how important the fact that you all would be here
24 today to take the time and come, many of you from across
25 the

3

1 country, it is just a great tribute to your commitment to
2 this issue. And all I can say is thank you.

3 I want to thank the principal, the teachers,
4 everybody at Eleanor Roosevelt High School, who made this
5 possible today. I cannot imagine what it must have been
6 like having all these people troop through your school.

7
8 Most of all, I would like to say a special
9 thank you to the students, the students from Roosevelt
10 High,
11 and the young people who have come from across the country
12 to
13 participate in this program. I think the most important
14 thing we can do in our whole undertaking, to give our
15 youth
16 a future, is to listen to our youth. They have tremendous
17 ideas.

17 (Applause.)

18 ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: We beat around the bush.
19
20 We talk in jargon. They talk so direct and right to the
21 point. They say it from the heart. They know it from
22 experience. And they are a wonderful resource. And thank
23 you so much for providing your insight today in such a
24 wonderfully articulate and thoughtful way.

25 Where do we go from here?

4

1 I hate to go to conferences and say, well, I
2 went

3 to the conference, I met a lot of nice people, I heard a
4 lot
5 of good ideas, and what are we going to do now?

6 Well, in my group, I asked that question. I got
7 very specific answers, and I am going to go over the
8 transcript and make sure I have got the answers so that we
9 can follow up and get back to you on specific ideas that
10 you
11 have for the Federal Government. But I think the sense I
12 got from this conference is that what we really need to do
13 is to reinforce the coalitions that we are forming across
14 this country, coalitions between the Federal Government
15 and
16 State and local government, between the private and the
17 public sector, between schools, police, and doctors,
18 between
19 everyone concerned about our future.

20 When you see people come together, when you see
21 people focussed together on the problem, when you see them
22 reweave the fabric of community around kids and families
23 at
24 risk, you can see the difference that such an effort can
25 make. And so I think, from here, we must go forward,

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1 rededicated, each of us, to forming partnerships at local
2 levels.

3 Now, that is kind of a difficult task for me,
4 when
5 I look at the thousands and thousands of communities
6 across
7 this Nation, but, working together, working through our
8 various public officials, working through housing leaders
9 in the community, through U.S. Attorneys, through local
10 police officers, teachers, families, students, that can
11 make
12 a difference. I think we can do it.

13 Where do we begin?

14 I think what we say matters a lot. And I think
15 we should talk in direct, simple terms about what matters.
16

17 I think we have got to send the message loud and clear
18 about

19 violence and what it is doing to our young people -- that
20 it kills, that it hurts, that it ruins. We have got to
21 send
22 a message very loud and clear that drugs can tear up a
23 life,
24 and ruin a life for the future, or make it very difficult
25 to get back on the main road.

6

1 But as we send that message, I think it is
2 imperative that we send, from all that I have heard today,
3 another message to our young people: That we are here for
4 you, that we are here to support you, that we are behind
5 you, that we trust you and respect you and want to work
6 with
7 you in trying to work together to see how we solve this
8 problem.

9 Wherever I go, I try to talk to young people who
10 have been in trouble or who are in trouble. I ask them
11 what
12 could have been done to make a difference, how could they
13 have avoided the problem in the first place. And they
14 come
15 back poignantly, again and again, with two points:
16 Something to do in the afternoon and evenings, something
17 constructive, something that can keep me occupied during
18 the
19 summertime. And then, somebody to talk to, somebody who
20 understands how difficult it is to grow up in America
21 today,
22 somebody that can give me a pat on the back when I deserve
23 it, and somebody that can tell me I have done wrong when I
24 know that I have, or need some direction.

25 We can make this difference if we talk to our

7

1 kids
2 in clear, supportive terms, providing limits, but reaching
3 out to develop the trust and respect that is so critical.
4 But if we are going to talk in terms -- in
5 simple, clear terms -- we have got to mean what we say. We
6 have got to let people know that there are sanctions when
7 we do wrong; that these sanctions have got to be swift,

8 certain, sure, and they have got to fit the crime.

9 But that when a kid first gets in trouble when
10 they are 11 or 12, it does not do any good just to send
11 them
12 home, and then send them home again when they are 13 or
13 14.

14 You have got to develop an understanding of what caused
15 the
16 problem in the first place. You have got to do a
17 comprehensive assessment and evaluation. And it cannot be
18 just a one-month program for a kid who has been neglected
19 for 11 years of his life.

20 You have got to put together a comprehensive
21 assessment that can be followed up with a program that can
22 correct the problem. And it cannot be corrected
23 overnight.

24 A kid ignored for 11 years is not going to be changed in
25 one

8

1 month.

2 It is going to take a more comprehensive
3 community
4 effort to change that young person, a comprehensive
5 community effort of community police officers, working
6 with
7 teachers, working with community activists, parks and
8 recreation persons, social workers, youth counselors, to
9 make a difference. People giving that young person an
10 opportunity to talk, to understand, to explain the pain,
11 to
12 explain what has happened in their life, an opportunity to
13 talk out the problems and develop the confidence and
14 self-esteem so necessary to cope with the problems of the
15 world today.

16 We have got to make sure that as the young
17 person
18 gets in trouble again, there is going to be a more certain
19 sanction each step of the way. But it has got to be
20 followed with a plan of treatment.

21 If there is a drug problem, we have got to
22 address
23 it firmly, directly, with enough resources to give that

24 kid
25 a chance to get off on the right foot. Again, in some

9

1 instances, it will not be done overnight, it will not be
2 done with a five-week program in a treatment unit. It may
3 take a year and a half. It may take two years. It may
4 take
5 aftercare. But we can make a difference if we concentrate
6 our efforts, looking not just at the child, but the child
7 and the family and the neighborhood and the school and the
8 whole world that that child lives in.

9 If you correct one part of a child's life and do
10 not address the other causes that have created the
11 problem,
12 you are going to waste money as you go along. We have got
13 to recognize that there are some serious youthful
14 offenders,
15 people that rob and hurt and shoot and maim and kill. And
16 we have got to develop programs for them and serious
17 offender programs for them, and, in some instances, adult
18 prosecution that can occur when the crime requires it.

19 But, again, we have got to develop a
20 comprehensive
21 system that makes sense from the beginning. But all the
22 best juvenile justice programs that we could probably put
23 together will be for naught, based upon everything I have
24 heard, unless we provide programs for aftercare and follow
25 up. To send a kid to the best youthful offender program

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1 in
2 the country, and then to return them to the apartment over
3 the open-air drug market where they got into trouble in
4 the
5 first place, with no backup, no support in the community,
6 will only waste all the dollars that we have spent on this
7 wonderful program for youthful offenders.

8 Aftercare can make such a great difference. A
9 24-hour hot line, somebody that you can call, job training
10 and placement, the opportunity for a real job, the
11 opportunity for a real future.

12 But before we get to that, it was exciting today

13 to hear what a difference police officers can make in
14 keeping people out of the system in the first place. The
15 President, who spearheaded the effort to put 100,000
16 community police officers on the streets of America -- and
17 we have heard a lot about what they are doing -- but key
18 to
19 it all is the community police officer who goes into the
20 community and gets to know not just the law-abiding
21 people,
22 but all the people, not just the good kids, but all the
23 kids.

24 A police officer who knows how to communicate
25 and

11

1 relate and who cares about people is probably one of the
2 most effective forces for good in this country today.
3 Those
4 police officers are on the cutting edge of bringing
5 America
6 together again, ending division in communities, of
7 developing trust and understanding. And it is exciting to
8 hear from young people what one good police officer can
9 do,
10 in terms of easing frustrations, reducing tension, and
11 making a difference.

12 But a police officer not only that relates to
13 particular citizens in the neighborhood, but a police
14 officer who can form a partnership with schools, with the
15 parks and recreation specialist in the community,
16 a police officer who
17 can
18 work with families with difficult situations, to refer
19 them
20 appropriate facilities in the community that will help
21 solve
22 those situations, and make a truly significant difference.

23 And law enforcement can make a difference in
24 tracking guns and figuring out who is getting guns into
25 the

12

1 hands of kids, and interrupting the supply of guns. Law

2 enforcement can be so effective in disrupting gang
3 activity
4 by focussing on those that lead the gangs, in a
5 cooperative
6 effort between Federal and State and local law
7 enforcement,
8 each, done in the right way, while at the same time,
9 developing programs with community police officers to get
10 those on the periphery back into positive pursuits before
11 it is too late.

12 Again, we can make such a difference.

13 But the message I heard loud and clear from
14 police
15 officers, from sheriffs, from juvenile court judges, from
16 young people, from almost everybody that I have talked to
17 both last night and today, is that we cannot wait until
18 people get into the juvenile justice system. We will
19 never
20 be able to develop enough programs if we wait till a kid
21 is
22 16 years old and an armed robber. We have got to start
23 much
24 earlier.

25 We have got to recognize that more kids are

13

1 without adult supervision than ever before, that they are
2 spending their time in unsupervised environments, or
3 watching TV, or playing computer games, and they do not
4 have
5 that mentor, they do not have that support, they do not
6 have
7 the limits that are so critical to helping children grow
8 in
9 a strong, constructive way.

10 If we put our moneys, as one young person said
11 today, you know how much it takes to keep somebody in
12 prison
13 or how much it takes to put somebody in the jail? If we
14 just took that and put it up front into afternoon and
15 evening programs, and in summer programs, not just sports,
16 but other programs that can help educate and help prepare
17 our young people, and provide them constructive

18 activities,
19 we can make such and extraordinary difference.

20 We can make a difference by developing the true
21 partnership between the schools and police officers, so
22 that
23 we focus on kids in the elementary school. Why does a kid
24 have to be 13 and think, I do not trust that police
25 officer,

14

1 if schools and police had worked together, and, at
2 second grade, they got to know that police officer and
3 respected him as a person they could trust, as a person
4 they
5 looked up to, as a person who was fair, it could make all
6 the difference.

7 We can make a difference if schools and police
8 officers and others learn to work together to identify
9 conflict resolution programs that can make a difference.
10 If we can send a man to the moon, we can surely, surely
11 teach our young people how to resolve conflicts without
12 knives and guns and fists, and some of the conflict
13 resolution programs that exist in the country today are
14 marvelous lessons for what we can provide in the future.
15 And mentoring programs, again, somebody for that young
16 person to talk to, somebody that can make a difference.

17 But everybody kept coming back to the fact that
18 when a child was in the sixth grade, oftentimes it was too
19 late. And that sometimes it was too late even in the
20 second
21 grade. If we are going to do something long term about
22 violence in America, if we are going to make a difference,
23 we have got to start focusing on children when they come
24 into this world, when they learn what the concept of
25 reward

15

1 and punishment means, when they develop a conscience, in
2 those ages of 0 to 3.

3 And so, as we forge partnerships, as we leave
4 here
5 today, as we go forth from here today, let us forge a
6 partnership not just to improve the juvenile justice

7 systems
8 of this country, not just to provide wonderful activity
9 for
10 our young people, and opportunity for our young people in
11 elementary school and in high school, but let us forge a
12 future for those kids being born today, to give them the
13 foundation upon which to learn, upon which to grow without
14 violence, upon which to grow with self-confidence and
15 self-esteem.

16 Let us, in effect, reweave the fabric of society
17 and community and family around the children who are at
18 risk
19 in this world. Let us give them the confidence, the
20 self-esteem they need to cope with a world that is faced
21 with extraordinary challenges.

22 Yet some people tell me this seems too hard. It
23 is not too hard. I have already made notes today of ideas
24 that I got from an hour-and-a-half's conference of things
25 that I want to follow up on, issues that I want to

16

1 address,
2 issues that I can address in the Department of Justice.
3 And
4 we are going to go over those transcripts.

5
6 I have got a bunch of
7 get-back
8 lists for myself today.

9 But it is so important that we follow up on this
10 within communities, and that it is not just for today,
11 that
12 you continue to let us know, if it is something that Donna
13 Shalala can do, let her know. If it is something that I
14 should be doing that I am not doing, let me know. But
15 let's
16 take what we have learned today, let's take the ideas and
17 go forth.

18 And we can make a difference. I look at it this
19 way. On the early morning of August 24, 1992, Hurricane
20 Andrew hit the area in which I lived. I have never heard
21 a noise like that before. It was a howl. I went out the
22 next morning, and the whole world looked like a World War

23 I battlefield. Every tree was down.

24 I walked out, and this physical disaster had
25 really broken for a day or two the bonds of community.

17

1 People were afraid. They were absolutely undirected.

2 They

3 did not know quite what to do next.

4 And then suddenly, you watched the world come
5 together. You watched people stand out in the middle of
6 the

7 street, directing traffic, because every traffic light was
8 out. You watched people bring in water to a community
9 that

10 was more desperately impacted than another. You watched
11 people come together and share.

12 You watched people bring people into their
13 homes.

14 You watched Americans come from hundreds of miles away to
15 help. And they continued to come to help, and to send
16 materials. And you watched a community come back together
17 again, a community that now, over 3 years later, has still
18 some scars, but has healed because Americans came together
19 in a partnership.

20 And then I saw it more recently. In the Sunday
21 following the blast in Oklahoma City, I watched the
22 citizens

23 of Oklahoma City gather together to join forces to speak
24 out

25 against the violence that had spawned that blast, to help

18

1 the victims and the survivors begin to heal, to help law
2 enforcement bring the people accountable, responsible for
3 that, to justice. I watched a force and a spirit that I
4 will never forget.

5 And then I saw it in other places. I met fire
6 fighters in Indianapolis, who had gone to Oklahoma City to
7 help. And again, the spirit existed throughout this
8 country.

9 This Nation can do so much in times of disaster.

10

11 It can come together and be strong, and be the nation that

12 we know it to be. We have got a situation now with
13 respect to our youth, the violence, the drugs, that have
14 beset them.
15 But we have got a resource. They are so young, but they
16 are
17 so resilient. They are so tender, but they are so tough.
18 They are so innocent, but they are so bright and
19 intelligent. And if we all come together, as we have and
20 will continue to do in time of disaster, we can truly make
21 a difference.

22 Thank you all so very, very much.

23 (Applause.)

24 (Whereupon, at 4:55 p.m., the Attorney General's
25 remarks were concluded.)