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UNITED STATES

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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Speech to

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THE UNITED WAY

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THE HONORABLE JANET RENO

14

Attorney General of the United States

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Atlanta, Georgia

April 23, 1998

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Thank you
3 very much, but I am the one that should be
4 applauding you. Most of you I don't know,
5 but many of you I do.

6 I remember when Harv Mogel first
7 came to Miami. He came to talk to me about
8 Success by Six, and I know the difference
9 that he has made. But before Harv, there
10 were so many people, so many dedicated
11 volunteers, who struggled to make sure that
12 other people's lives would be changed for the
13 better.

14 You have touched the lives of
15 millions, all over this country, and I have

16 met people in other communities doing the
17 same thing. You have given hope and heart
18 and courage to people who never thought that
19 they would see the light at the end of the
20 tunnel.

21 I praise you, and I honor you and I
22 salute you for your great and wonderful work.

3

1 Violence against our youth breaks
2 our heart. Violence by our young people
3 casts an awful pall across this nation and
4 leaves us in numb confusion. Whether it be
5 at Jonesboro or Liberty City, our nation's
6 capital or an Indian reservation, no place
7 and no young person is immune.

8 If it is not the problem of
9 violence, it is the problem of our youth
10 dropping out, dropping out of school,
11 dropping out of community.

12 It is the problem of youth beset by

13 disease, whether it be TB or AIDS. It is the
14 problem of some youth, who spend their days
15 in a long, slow blur of alcohol and drugs.

16 It is youth trying to overcome the
17 reaction they have to some racial cut. It is
18 youth, too often, living in hopeless
19 indifference.

20 But there are so many magnificent
21 and wonderful young people in this nation
22 who, if given only half a fighting chance,

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1 want so much to contribute, to make a
2 difference, to be part of this nation, to be
3 part of its destiny. It is important that we
4 work together to give them that future.

5 Across this nation, you are engaged
6 in that effort, and so many other people are
7 involved.

8 We have seen the juvenile crime
9 rate come down for the first time. Teen

10 pregnancy is down. But, ladies and
11 gentlemen, we have a habit in this country,
12 when we see just a little bit of success, of
13 turning and moving on to something else. We
14 can never move on from our children.

15 We require, instead, a greater
16 effort because the number of young people
17 between the ages of 12 and 17 will increase
18 significantly in these next five to ten
19 years. The gap between those who have in
20 this country and those who don't have enough
21 increases.

22 Jobs in this nation go unfilled,

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1 because our youth lack skills.

2 Then we are confronted, again, with
3 a horrible tragedy in Jonesboro or
4 someplace else, and we remember that we must
5 go home from here, back to our communities.

6 Let us go back to our communities

7 and blaze a path for our children to come
8 home. For our children to come home to
9 safety, to come home to learning, to come
10 home to a place where there is love and arms
11 around them. To come home to understanding,
12 and to come home to laughter and to fun.

13 Let us reweave the fabric of
14 community around our children. Let us
15 cherish them and give them a strong and
16 positive future.

17 How do we do that? There are so
18 many people in this room who, I think, know
19 the answer and are trying to make sure we
20 provide that answer. But, I think it is
21 important for us to remember what the tools
22 and the processes and the building blocks

1 are.

2 First of all, I think the problem
3 is going to be solved, not in Washington, not

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4 in the state capital, not just in the county
5 commission's or the city commission's
6 chambers. It is going to be solved in the
7 communities of America, with United Way
8 helping to lead the way.

9 It will be solved by partnerships
10 between the federal, state and local
11 governments and the private sector. It will
12 be solved by all disciplines, not just the
13 police, not just teachers, not just a
14 business person, but everybody coming
15 together. It will be solved by the people,
16 themselves.

17 If we sit in the United Way
18 boardroom or in the office of the Attorney
19 General and say, This is what must be done,
20 without bringing the people, including the
21 marvelous young people, who want to be
22 involved into our efforts, we will not

1 succeed.

2 Finally, if we are to succeed, we
3 must remember one clear message. Childhood
4 does not end at six. Childhood does not end
5 at ten. Childhood is from the beginning
6 until the time you have grown up.

7 We have got to provide a fabric
8 that provides continuity from zero to
9 eighteen if we are to make a difference.

10 What is that fabric? What are
11 those building blocks?

12 First, the best answer is strong
13 and healthy parents. You are doing so much
14 through Success by Six and through your other
15 initiatives and your support for so many
16 worthwhile community programs to make sure
17 parents have the skills they need to be good,
18 successful parents.

19 We have got to make sure that
20 parents provide a safe place for their
21 children, and that we focus on the problem of
22 domestic violence. Realizing that the child

1 who watches his father beat his mother comes
2 to accept violence as a way of life and
3 perpetuates that cycle of violence.

4 We must make sure that parents have
5 time to spend with their children,
6 encouraging the business sector to provide
7 child care that is adjacent to the workplace,
8 or to provide opportunities for
9 telecommuting, or to provide opportunities
10 for job sharing or limited work weeks.

11 Let us understand that our
12 investment in our future is not just an
13 investment in smokestacks and infrastructure,
14 in dollars. It is an investment of time in
15 our children, and it is one of the best
16 investments we can make if we want a return
17 in 20 to 50 years.

18 I remember my afternoons and summer
19 times. My mother worked in the home. She

20 taught us to play baseball. She taught us to
21 bake cakes. She taught us to appreciate
22 Beethoven's symphonies, and she taught me the

9

1 poets she loved.

2 She also gave me all her dislikes
3 too, which I am slowly overcoming.

4 She taught us how to play fair, and
5 she spanked us when we didn't. And she loved
6 us with all her heart.

7 There is no child care in the world
8 that will ever be the substitute for what
9 that lady was in our life. Somehow or other,
10 we have got to provide it for all our
11 children.

12 Let us make sure that every child
13 in America has proper preventative medical
14 care, prenatal care and health care along the
15 way that gives them the chance to grow.

16 I have looked at too many

17 pre-sentence investigations that said, It may
18 have been caused by a high fever, which went
19 unattended.

20 If this nation can afford
21 operations for people who are 70 that extend
22 their life expectancy by four years, we can

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1 make sure that our children have proper
2 preventative medical care.

3 Let us make sure that our children,
4 all our children, have the benefit of
5 education from the beginning. The experts
6 tell me, and nobody has refuted it yet -- and
7 I have repeated this again and again -- the
8 child development experts tell me that zero
9 to three is the time you learn the concept of
10 reward and punishment and develop a
11 conscience.

12 What good are all the prisons going
13 to be, years from now, if you don't

14 understand what punishment means?

15 Fifty percent of all learned human
16 responses are learned in the first year of
17 life. What good are the best educational
18 opportunities going to be, eight years from
19 now, if that child does not have the
20 foundation of learning?

21 Let us not invest in just child
22 care. Let's call it "educare," and let's do

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1 it from the beginning in the right way,
2 involving the parents in every way we
3 possibly can.

4 Let us carry forward to K through
5 12, and looking out at this audience, I see
6 some who probably were in elementary school
7 about the time that I was. It was a
8 marvelous place.

9 I hated to go to school, because I
10 would prefer to stay home and ride my pony.

11 But I remember that so well, and I remember
12 the lessons that I learned. I remember how
13 we revered our teachers.

14 Let us start looking and putting
15 priorities straight in this nation.

16 Something is wrong with a nation that pays
17 its football players in the six digit figures
18 and pays its schoolteachers what we pay them.

19 Let us join together to keep our
20 children in school through a truancy
21 initiative. Let us make sure that there are
22 after-school programs, recognizing that when

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1 that school door opens and those children
2 walk out, they walk out into less supervision
3 than probably children have had at any time
4 in our history.

5 Let us make sure that there are
6 mentors there, if there are not other adults,
7 to ensure supervision.

8 Let us make sure that our children
9 live in at least decent housing. I have
10 walked into too many places where the toilet
11 is falling into the kitchen below, and nobody
12 is doing anything about it.

13 Let us galvanize our Legal Services
14 Programs, work together with HUD, to make
15 sure that we are accountable to our people.

16 But none of this will make any
17 difference, if there are not safety
18 precautions along the way.

19 We have seen so much done through
20 community policing, through communities
21 devising how they want their police to
22 respond, what their problems are, what their

1 priorities are.

2 The exciting thing is to see that
3 75 year old lady, who wouldn't come out from
4 behind her door because she was frightened,

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5 suddenly start talking to the community
6 police officer. Then come out and sit on her
7 front steps, and then start giving everybody
8 a piece of her mind. Then walking down to
9 the community center, where there is an
10 advocate's meeting going on, and becoming the
11 single best advocate for the community.

12 It doesn't cost that much money to
13 get people involved.

14 Let us make sure that we provide
15 alternatives to gangs. Again and again,
16 young people will tell me, when I ask them
17 what could have kept them out of trouble,
18 what could have kept them out of the gang?
19 Something to do in the afternoon and evening,
20 and somebody to talk to who understands how
21 hard it is to grow up in this nation today.

22 That is not expensive in dollars.

1 That is expensive in time, but it is one of

2 the rewarding returns, to be there for a
3 young person.

4 Let us focus on alcohol and drugs,
5 and we know we can make a difference. Let us
6 make sure that we prevent it. But if we
7 can't prevent it, that we use the best
8 medical knowledge we have, along with
9 after-care programs, to give our kids a new
10 chance.

11 Let us come to grips with guns, and
12 make sure that we understand, that if we are
13 going to ensure a world without violence for
14 our children, we have got to get guns out of
15 the hands of our children in unsupervised and
16 unlawful situations.

17 Ladies and gentlemen, there is a
18 marvelous initiative spreading across this
19 country. It started with lawyers, who can be
20 more litigious and contentious than anybody I
21 know. And I discovered that a lot of the
22 lawyers were learning what I have learned,

1 and Abraham Lincoln has learned, and that is
2 that litigation can be awfully expensive, and
3 it can oftentimes produce a poor result for
4 everybody. Sometimes it is better to use
5 appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms and
6 get a good result for everybody.

7 That is what schoolteachers are
8 learning, and community police officers are
9 learning, and young people are learning in
10 Washington and around this nation.

11 I urge the United Way to do
12 everything it can to spread the concept of
13 dispute resolution and conflict resolution,
14 to teach young people how to listen, how to
15 talk, how to communicate, and how to problem
16 solve. These programs are making such a
17 difference in terms of the peace they bring
18 to the communities.

19 The final building block, one

20 simple but one important word: Jobs. Not
21 make-work jobs, but jobs that give people a
22 chance to earn a living wage. Jobs developed

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1 by school-to-work programs that can make a
2 difference. Jobs that are developed by
3 employers giving a youngster a chance in the
4 summer to learn what working is all about.
5 Schools that prepare our youngsters by making
6 sure that they have a skill that can enable
7 them to earn a living wage.

8 And then, finally, let us give our
9 young people the opportunity to serve.

10 I remember during World War II, one
11 aunt came home from the war, a member of the
12 Women's Army Service Pilots. She has towed
13 targets and ferried bombers and served her
14 nation. I thought she was one of the
15 greatest people I had ever known.

16 Then, her sister came home, an Army

17 nurse from North Africa, who had gone in
18 behind Patton's army. Both these ladies had
19 served, and they never forgot their service.

20 There is so much opportunity we can
21 provide our young people to serve in this
22 country and around the world, to bring peace

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1 and so much good to so many. Let us unlock
2 that door of opportunity for them.

3 Those are the building blocks.

4 Where do we go from here?

5 In order to help our children grow
6 up healthy, the President has proposed, what
7 I think and what others believe who have
8 even more knowledge than I do of history,
9 most comprehensive set of initiatives
10 to benefit children ever seen.

11 It contemplates federal support for
12 children and for young people from the day
13 that they are born through to the entry into

14 the job force.

15 Let me briefly tell you about five
16 major initiatives.

17 First, for zero to three. Those
18 years, as I have pointed out, are so
19 important. That building block is so
20 critical. Your Success by Six Program is an
21 example, an excellent example, of the kind of
22 good work that can be done in communities, if

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1 they make early childhood development a
2 priority.

3 President Clinton's child care
4 initiative proposes \$3 billion for early
5 learning programs and for improving the
6 quality and the safety of child care for
7 children in these earliest years. It
8 proposes \$7.5 billion to double the number of
9 children receiving educare subsidies to more
10 than two million by the year 2003.

11 The President's plan also proposes
12 increases for Headstart and Early Headstart,
13 which will help more than a million children
14 take advantage of these programs.

15 With respect to health care. The
16 President has worked successfully to expand
17 health care coverage for uninsured children
18 and, this year, has asked Congress to fund
19 health outreach programs, including the use
20 of schools and child care centers, to make
21 sure that millions of eligible, but currently
22 uninsured children, receive health care

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1 benefits for which they are now eligible.

2 With respect to education. We must
3 dramatically strengthen elementary and
4 secondary education, helping children start
5 out in small classes where they have the
6 opportunity to learn with good teachers in
7 safe and modern schools.

8 The President's plan calls for
9 \$12.4 billion over the next seven years to
10 hire an additional 100,000 well-prepared
11 teachers in order to reduce class size in
12 grades 1 through 3 to a nationwide average of
13 18.

14 This program includes initiatives
15 to test new teachers, develop more rigorous
16 teacher testing and certification
17 requirements, and train teachers in effective
18 reading instruction.

19 The President has also proposed
20 federal tax credits to pay interest on nearly
21 \$22 billion in bonds to build and to renovate
22 public schools. This will permit them to

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1 house smaller classes, to accommodate
2 children's needs throughout the day, and to
3 provide truly safe and nurturing communities
4 for children in which they can grow and learn

5 and explore the wonders of this world.

6 A fourth major initiative for
7 children is in the area of after-school
8 programs. As you may well have heard, most
9 juvenile crime occurs between the time
10 children leave school and the time parents
11 arrive home from work. Unsupervised hours
12 are not only too often wasteful, they are far
13 too often dangerous.

14 President Clinton's child care plan
15 would quadruple current spending on
16 after-school programs that keep young people
17 safe and occupied in the afternoons and early
18 evenings. These funds, when combined with a 20
19 state-match, will provide for new
20 after-school activities for up to 500,000
21 children each year.

22 Finally, we must ensure support for

1 children in their transition from school to

2 work. Through the Department of Labor's
3 School to Work Program, the Administration
4 has been helping communities show children
5 the links between what they learn at school
6 and what they will be able to do at work.
7 This lesson helps more young people in school
8 and helps put them on track to supporting
9 themselves and their families.

10 In terms of the Department of
11 Justice and crime prevention, I am committed
12 to doing everything I possibly can to support
13 your efforts and your communities' efforts to
14 build a fabric and to put all the building
15 blocks together that will give our children a
16 safe and positive environment.

17 First, we would like to continue to
18 conduct and provide proven research on what
19 works and what doesn't work, based on our
20 national perspective, so that we can share it
21 with you and you can invest your dollars,
22 based on research and proper evaluation.

1 Secondly, we want to offer you
2 high-quality training and technical
3 assistance, so that you can successfully
4 adapt principles of effective crime
5 prevention to your specific circumstances.

6 I have been touched, in these last
7 six months especially, when sheriffs and
8 mayors, sometimes from smaller towns, come to
9 me and say, Where do I begin? How do I put
10 the pieces together?

11 We would like to help provide the
12 answers, if you want them. But often times,
13 you have got the better answers, and you know
14 what you need from us to fill in the blanks.

15 Third, we want to provide seed
16 money to get initiatives off the ground and
17 to show whether they work or not work. But
18 we also want to provide drug court monies,
19 monies for violence against women programs,
20 so many other areas where we think we can

21 work with you to support your initiatives and
22 to help implement your plans in the

1 community.

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2 Now, one thing I would like to talk
3 on for just a moment, something of real
4 concern to me. In addition to the
5 Administration's proposals on behalf of the
6 children, Congress has indicated its
7 intention to address the subject of juvenile
8 justice this session.

9 There are positive steps the
10 Congress can take to reduce violent crime and
11 delinquency by our people, but we must keep
12 in mind that this is a problem which must be
13 attacked at the local level, not from top
14 down of Washington telling us what to do.

15 Our juvenile justice systems must
16 hold children accountable for breaking the
17 law by providing fair, firm punishment that

18 fits the crime. And I will point out, that
19 fair, firm punishment won't make a bit of
20 difference if we return the child to the
21 open-air drug market and the apartment over
22 it where he got into trouble in the first

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1 place.

2 We have got to provide after-care
3 and support and follow-up. But the system
4 must also help children reject crime in the
5 first place, and get them back on track.

6 Right now, while Congress seems
7 poised to tell the states exactly what to do
8 to punish their young offenders, it appears
9 curiously shy in the area of crime
10 prevention. In fact, the bill pending in the
11 Senate sets aside no funding for delinquency
12 prevention, none for early childhood
13 programs, for truancy prevention programs,
14 for after-school programs, for mentoring

15 programs, or for other initiatives you know
16 are so important. This is a serious mistake.

17 Everywhere I travel around the
18 country, police chiefs, sheriffs, police
19 officers on the beat tell me that they simply
20 cannot arrest -- and we cannot build enough
21 jails -- to work our way out of this crime
22 problem.

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1 They say, without investments in
2 children -- and these are police officers and
3 sheriffs -- especially those most at risk of
4 crime, all the police and the prisons in the
5 world aren't going to make our communities
6 safe.

7 So why do some in Congress still
8 oppose targeting funding for prevention
9 programs? Primarily, they say that in the
10 area of delinquency prevention, we still
11 don't know what works.

12 You in this room, in your
13 communities, with what you have done with
14 United Way, know that we can make things
15 work. We have got to send the message loud
16 and clear so that we get the funding.

17 Now, there is nothing quite as
18 effective as the well-known community
19 advocate giving people a piece of her mind
20 about what works. But it also helps to be
21 able to point out that, over and over,
22 scientific evaluations prove that programs

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1 that intervene with high-risk children to
2 provide carefully designed guidance for them
3 and their parents can turn children's lives
4 around.

5 A new study, released just
6 yesterday by the Rand Corporation, proves
7 that some of these programs even pay for
8 themselves many times over. Congress must

9 take up crime prevention and fund it with
10 identifiable funds.

11 If you need information to help you
12 in the county commission and the state
13 legislature about what works and what doesn't
14 work, let us know.

15 My second grave concern about the
16 bill is that it dangerously retreats from the
17 core principles governing delinquents in
18 state custody. Twenty-five years ago, in
19 response to crisis levels of youth suicide
20 and assault in adult jails, Congress enacted
21 a law requiring that juvenile delinquents be
22 housed separately from adult detainees.

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1 It also prohibited the secure
2 detention of status offenders, youngsters
3 whose acts, such as truancy and running away,
4 would not be crimes but for their age.
5 Several years later, when it was determined

6 that even separation by sight and sound was
7 not sufficient to curb the suicides by and
8 assaults upon juveniles, Congress realized
9 that it had to require states to remove
10 juveniles from adult jails altogether.

11 Now, despite that evidence of harm
12 to juveniles, the Senate seems ready to
13 reverse these long-standing rules, including
14 the protections for status offenders, perhaps
15 our most vulnerable population.

16 Such a reversal would be flat out
17 wrong. It would not only threaten the youth
18 who are detained, it would threaten public
19 safety by substantially increasing the
20 chances that youth who enter the system as
21 delinquents will come out as hardened
22 criminals. If the final legislation includes

1 this prevention, it may well make the
2 juvenile crime problem worse, rather than

3 better.

4 I have spoken of what the federal
5 government can do as part of the partnership,
6 but as I emphasized at the very beginning,
7 communities are where the problem is going to
8 be solved.

9 I have seen something exciting
10 happen in the last, brief period of time. I
11 have seen the United Way rise to a challenge,
12 a challenge by which we join together to try
13 to quantify what more we can do to give our
14 children a positive future. Not just talk
15 about it, but develop means of identifying
16 positive goals that we can achieve, and then,
17 adding to those goals as we go along.

18 I am very pleased to announce that
19 today, as part of this conference, United Way
20 will help lead a national coalition of
21 service providers, The Coalition for
22 America's Children, to advance five specific,

1 concrete, measurable goals aimed at improving
2 the healthy and safe development of our
3 children.

4 These contributions will go a long
5 way toward the larger goals that the federal
6 government has set for itself in aiding
7 communities. They will go a longer way.
8 They will be a step in what you are doing and
9 will be doing in your communities. They will
10 be a part of, and they will build on, your
11 Success by Six.

12 Over the next two years, the
13 Coalition will aim to make a dramatic
14 difference in three of the five areas I just
15 discussed: Children's health care, school
16 attendance and after-school enrichment.

17 The Coalition will attack two other
18 problems which impact children of all ages:
19 Gun violence and the abuse of alcohol and
20 drugs.

21 There is an energy in this room.

22 Whenever I go to a United Way meeting, even

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1 when I first started practicing law in Miami,
2 there was an energy of innovation and ideas
3 and commitment. We can use that energy, that
4 boldness, that innovation, that commitment to
5 community, to truly rebuild community around
6 our children.

7 I am happy to announce that
8 Secretary Shalala, at the Department of
9 Health and Human Services, and Secretary Dick
10 Riley, at the Department of Education, join
11 me in saluting the United Way for undertaking
12 this critical challenge.

13 They, too, pledge the support of
14 their Departments, as I pledge the support of
15 the Department of Justice, to doing all that
16 we can, all that I can humanly, possibly do,
17 to support the Coalition's efforts to achieve

18 these bold objectives, to use all the
19 building blocks in your community, to build a
20 world for our children.

21 The first goal of the Coalition is
22 with respect to health care, and that is to

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1 substantially expand access to health
2 coverage to eligible, but presently
3 uninsured, children. Right now, over 10
4 million American children, one in seven, are
5 uninsured. Many of these children come from
6 working families with incomes too high to
7 qualify for Medicaid, but too low to afford
8 private health insurance.

9 As I noted, President Clinton
10 helped to enact a new law which set aside \$24
11 billion over five years for states to provide
12 new health care coverage. But as the
13 President has clearly said, "Coverage is,
14 unfortunately, not the only issue."

15 More than 3 million of these
16 uninsured children are actually eligible for
17 insurance, but they are not enrolled. This
18 is unforgivable, and, thankfully, we can do
19 something about it.

20 This Coalition will strive to
21 enroll at least 10 percent, or 300,000 of
22 these 3 million eligible children in health

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1 insurance programs over the next two years.

2 I challenge you to go further.
3 Make sure your community enrolls everybody
4 that is eligible. Why lose this opportunity
5 to give our children such a marvelous step
6 along the way to a strong and positive
7 future? It will make an enormous difference
8 in the lives of children and their families.

9 A second major area, in which the
10 Coalition will take the lead, is in keeping
11 children in school. Truancy is the first

12 sign of trouble in a young person's life.

13 One California prosecutor noted, "I have

14 never seen a gang member who wasn't a truant

15 first."

16 Anyone who works with troubled

17 children knows that truancy is the gateway to

18 delinquency, to drug and alcohol abuse, and

19 to more serious criminal behavior. It is

20 also costly.

21 It costs in education. It results

22 in reduced earning capacity. It costs school

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1 districts hundreds of thousands of dollars

2 each year in lost federal and state funds,

3 that are based on daily attendance figures.

4 It costs businesses, which must pay to train

5 uneducated workers. It costs us all.

6 To answer this, the Coalition will

7 mobilize communities to reduce truancy now by

8 identifying 200 school districts across the

9 nation, by working closely with district
10 officials to cut truancy by one-third over
11 the next two years.

12 We know this can be done. We have
13 seen programs around the nation, involving
14 parents, police officers, teachers, and
15 social service workers, along with
16 volunteers, who have been successful in
17 bringing our children back to their schools.

18 Every child, who is persuaded to
19 stay in school as a result of this effort
20 will create a brighter future for himself,
21 his family and his community. I think this
22 effort is going to be just splendid.

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1 One of the ways we get them back
2 into the community and into the school is by
3 making it interesting. I challenge you to
4 get those volunteers going.

5 One of my favorite stories is of a

6 man who stood up at a meeting in Miami and
7 said, "You know what I do three mornings a
8 week for three hours each morning? You know
9 how old I am?" I said, "No." He said, "I am
10 84 years old, and I volunteer as a teacher's
11 aide."

12 Suddenly, the young woman who was
13 seated next to him stood up, and she said, "I
14 am the first grade teacher for whom he
15 volunteers, and the gifted kids can't wait
16 for their time with him, and the children
17 with learning disabilities think he is a
18 saint, and he has more patience than I could
19 ever have. He has unlocked so many doors for
20 them."

21 Let us galvanize our communities
22 together to help you achieve this goal.

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1 The third task the Coalition will
2 take on is increasing access to after-school

3 programs. The President's call for quadruple
4 funds would serve 500,000 children throughout
5 America.

6 This new Coalition for America's
7 Children will aim to create constructive,
8 engaging, after-school opportunities for
9 another 100,000 children.

10 The Carnegie Foundation has said
11 that children are more alone and unsupervised
12 than at any time in our history. This effort
13 can make a difference.

14 The Coalition's work in this effort
15 will mean 100,000 lives tempted more towards
16 computers, drama and basic skills, instead of
17 street corners, alcohol, drugs and guns.

18 The fourth area that the Coalition
19 will tackle is the use of alcohol and illegal
20 drugs. In recent years, researchers have
21 proved with scientific certainty that certain
22 programs in junior high cut alcohol and drug

1 abuse by teens by up to 75 percent and
2 sustain these decreases in at least the next
3 six years.

4 New research demonstrates that we
5 know what works to reduce teen substance
6 abuse. I am happy to say that the Coalition
7 will ensure over the next two years that
8 100,000 more children in this nation will
9 participate in effective programs to prevent
10 and discourage alcohol and drug abuse. It
11 will work, and it will give those children a
12 future.

13 Finally, I want to turn to the
14 fifth goal, the reduction of juvenile gun
15 violence. If Jonesboro and the mayhem we see
16 across the nation make one clear point, it is
17 that we must confront the issue of children's
18 access to guns. We cannot turn away from it.
19 We all know that gun control debates divide
20 people in this nation, but I am sure that
21 there is one universal agreement on one

22 matter: The unsupervised, unauthorized use

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1 of guns by children is a recipe for tragedy.

2 We must teach young people, as well
3 as gun owners, in non-judgmental ways, that
4 unsupervised, unauthorized gun use by
5 children is simply unacceptable, and we must
6 take steps to keep illegal guns out of the
7 hands of our young people.

8 I am very grateful that the new
9 Coalition will work to develop, over the next
10 two years, new programs in 200 communities,
11 aimed at both teaching young people and gun
12 owners about safe and responsible gun
13 ownership and about keeping guns out of the
14 hands of young people who possess them
15 illegally.

16 Educational efforts about safe gun
17 ownership and storage, combined with
18 effective programs aimed at keeping illegal

19 guns out of the hands of young people, will
20 make us all safer.

21 As a tribute to the victims of
22 Arkansas's tragedy, as well as to the victims

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1 of youth violence all over this land, let us
2 turn our collective sorrow into constructive
3 work in reducing youth violence.

4 As we are busy teaching children to
5 be accountable for their actions, let us,
6 too, be accountable to them, marshaling our
7 best resources and energies to ensure that
8 they have a healthy and productive life.

9 I applaud the United Way for your
10 powerful leadership. I salute you for
11 Success by Six. I salute you for all that
12 you do for communities across America.

13 As the first participant in the new
14 Coalition for America's Children, I thank you
15 for your deep and abiding and effective

16 commitment to children.

17 We have some specific goals, and we
18 can build on those goals. Let us go home
19 from this conference and take our children
20 into the next century.

21 Let us work together to make it a
22 safe century for them, a century without

39

1 alcohol and drugs. A century without guns.

2 A century with love and arms around them.

3 A century where they can flourish
4 and become the computer expert, the
5 scientist, the lawyer, the doctor, the
6 plumber that best serves, that they can
7 become part of this nation.

8 For the last five years, I have had
9 a chance to meet so many wonderful people, so
10 many wonderful young people. And some people
11 ask me, after they have watched a
12 congressional hearing or so, or read the

13 newspapers, or looked at "Saturday Night
14 Live," or asked me what I thought of Ally
15 McBeal, they ask me, Is it worth it? Why do
16 you do it?

17 I will tell you, that after these
18 five years, I have never, ever believed as
19 strongly and as devoutly in the strength and
20 the courage and the compassion and the sense
21 of rightness of the American people,
22 evidenced so much by all that you do.

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1 Let us go forward together, to give
2 our children a century of which we can all be
3 proud.

4 SPEAKER: Janet Reno, thank you for
5 an inspiring message. They say, "Once a
6 United Way volunteer, always a United Way
7 volunteer," and we are awfully proud of your
8 association with United Way.

9 A couple of things that we owe you

10 in return for your leadership and for your
11 commitment to us, is an assurance of our
12 commitment to you.

13 You can count on us. You can count
14 on 1,400 United Ways. You can count on
15 45,000 agencies. You can count on thousands
16 of volunteers who will respond to the
17 opportunity to work together with you, to
18 deal with this most critical issue.

19 (Whereupon, the PROCEEDINGS were
20 concluded.)

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