

WELCOMING REMARKS

THE HONORABLE THOMAS H. KEAN

GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY

AT THE

GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON CRIME

MEADOWLANDS HILTON

SECAUCUS, NEW JERSEY

MAY 23, 1985

GOOD MORNING, AND A VERY WARM WELCOME TO ALL OF YOU TO THE FIRST-EVER GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON CRIME.

YOU KNOW, NEW JERSEY'S CARVED OUT A NAME FOR ITSELF IN A NUMBER OF AREAS DURING THESE LAST THREE YEARS. WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO BECOMING KNOWN AS LEADING HIGH TECH STATE IN THE NORTHEAST. WE'RE EARNING A REPUTATION FOR THE MOST INNOVATIVE SCHOOL REFORMS, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, FOR SOME OF THE BEST SCHOOLS, IN THE COUNTRY. WE'RE FAST BECOMING THE

SPORTS CAPITAL OF AMERICA -- THANKS IN NO SMALL PART TO THAT COMPLEX ACROSS THE STREET FROM HERE.

BUT THE AREA I'M PROUDEST OF IN WHICH NEW JERSEY HAS MADE A NAME FOR ITSELF AS A NATIONAL LEADER IS IN FIGHTING CRIME.

THINK ABOUT IT: IT'S WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT WE NOW HAVE THE TOUGHEST LAWS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING IN THE NATION. AND THE CRIME OF DRUNK DRIVING -- AND IT IS A CRIME -- HAS DROPPED SHARPLY.

WE HAVE A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM THAT'S BEEN CITED AS A MODEL FOR THE REST OF THE NATION.

BUT MOST OF ALL, WE HAVE AN OVERALL CRIME RATE THAT HAS PLUNGED NOW FOR FOUR YEARS IN A ROW. AND AS MANY OF YOU IN THIS ROOM KNOW, IT'S PLUNGED FAR FASTER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE; AND IT'S PLUNGED FASTER THAN THE CRIME RATES IN OUR NEIGHBORING STATES.

I'M PROUD OF THAT FACT.

IT MEANS THAT LIFE'S GETTING BETTER IN NEW JERSEY.

IT MEANS THAT NEW JERSEY IS BECOMING A SAFER STATE.

AND IT MEANS SOMETHING ELSE, TOO. IT MEANS THAT YOU
PEOPLE -- THE PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM -- THE LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL SERVICE COMMUNITIES -- ARE DOING
YOUR JOBS. AND DOING THEM WELL.

SO FIRST, I WANT TO THANK YOU. I WANT TO THANK YOU NOT
ONLY FOR COMING TO TODAY'S CONFERENCE, BUT I WANT TO THANK
ALL OF THE CHIEFS OF POLICE, PROSECUTORS, MUNICIPAL COURT
JUDGES, MAYORS, COMMUNITY CRIME WATCH LEADERS, SOCIAL
WORKERS, CASE MANAGERS, AND JUST PLAIN CONCERNED CITIZENS WHO
ARE IN THIS ROOM TODAY FOR HELPING TO BUILD A SAFER NEW
JERSEY.

TODAY, WE'RE HERE TO TALK ABOUT ACCELERATING THE DRIVE
FOR A SAFER NEW JERSEY.

TO BEGIN, LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT HAS WORKED. CLEARLY,
SOMETHING HAS.

THE WAR IS BEING WON.

CRIME IS GOING DOWN. IN FACT, NEW JERSEY'S CRIME RATE HAS DROPPED MORE IN THE LAST THREE YEARS -- BY 8 PERCENT IN 1982, 9 PERCENT IN 1983, AND 6 PERCENT LAST YEAR, THAN AT ANY TIME IN THE LAST DECADE AND A HALF -- SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE UNIFORM CRIME REPORTING SYSTEM.

WELL, A NUMBER OF THINGS HAVE WORKED.

THE GRAVES ACT, WHICH PROVIDES MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCES FOR CRIMES COMMITTED WITH A GUN, HAS WORKED. THE STAR LEDGER REPORTED EARLIER THIS YEAR THAT FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW, THE NUMBER OF CRIMES COMMITTED USING GUNS HAS DROPPED. IN ALL, THE NUMBER OF MURDERS, ROBBERIES, AND ASSAULTS INVOLVING GUNS HAS DROPPED BY ALMOST 38% -- AND THAT'S A FAR SHARPER DROP THAN THE OVERALL NUMBER OF THESE TYPES OF CRIMES.

THE MESSAGE IS GETTING OUT: USE A GUN IN A CRIME AND YOU'LL DO THREE YEARS. NO EXCUSES. WE MUST SPREAD THAT MESSAGE EVEN FURTHER.

IN MY VIEW, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEATH PENALTY FOR PARTICULARLY HEINOUS MURDERS HAS WORKED. I DO BELIEVE THAT SOMETIME, SOMEWHERE, THAT FLASH OF DOUBT MAY HAVE GONE THROUGH A POTENTIAL KILLER'S MIND THAT TAKING A LIFE COULD COST THAT PERSON THEIR OWN. AND IF IT DID -- THEN THE LAW SERVED ITS PURPOSE. AND EVERY TIME IT DOES IN THE FUTURE, THE LAW WILL HAVE WORKED AGAIN.

I THINK OUR ENTIRE PROGRAM OF TOUGHER SENTENCING HAS WORKED -- WHETHER IT'S TRANSFERRING PARTICULARLY VIOLENT JUVENILES TO SUPERIOR COURT, ENCOURAGING CONSECUTIVE SENTENCING FOR MULTIPLE OFFENDERS, OR THROWING THE BOOK AT DRUNK DRIVERS. THE ATTITUDE ABOUT CRIME IN NEW JERSEY HAS CHANGED. IT'S TOUGHER. IT'S FIRMER. AND IT SHOWS.

PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY OF ALL, OUR PROGRAM OF PRISON CONSTRUCTION -- THE MOST AMBITIOUS PRISON CONSTRUCTION UNDERTAKING IN THE HISTORY OF THE STATE -- HAS WORKED.

WE HAVE ADDED MORE THAN 3,200 CELLSPACES TO OUR PRISON CAPACITY. AND ANOTHER 2,700 CELLSPACES ARE ON THE WAY.

FORTY OTHER STATES IN THE NATION HAVE FACED FEDERAL COURT ORDERS OR LITIGATION BECAUSE OF OVERCROWDED FACILITIES. NEW JERSEY HAS NOT.

WE'VE HAD A POLICY IN THIS STATE. NO CONVICTED CRIMINAL WHO IS SENTENCED TO JAIL WILL BE TURNED INTO THE STREETS IN NEW JERSEY FOR LACK OF A CELL. THAT POLICY IS WORKING.

THE NEW FOCUS ON THE RIGHTS OF THE VICTIM -- AND NOT JUST THE RIGHTS OF THE CRIMINAL -- IS WORKING. WE HAVE PASSED SEVERAL VICTIMS' RIGHTS LAWS -- SUCH AS ONE THAT ALLOWS US TO CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF A CRIME ON THE VICTIM AT PAROLE HEARINGS. THOSE LAWS ARE WORKING.

AND OF COURSE, WE'VE DEVOTED MORE RESOURCES THAN EVER BEFORE TO PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE.

WE'VE INSTITUTED A NEW LAW TO DETER CRIMES AGAINST THE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE AMONG US -- SUCH AS SENIOR CITIZENS AND HANDICAPPED PERSONS.

AND WE'VE PURSUED TRAINING OF POLICE, OF PROSECUTORS,
AND OF EMERGENCY ROOM PERSONNEL IN THE EFFORT TO PREVENT
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

THESE STRATEGIES ARE WORKING. AND WE NEED MORE OF THEM.

IN TOTAL, THERE'S A NEW MESSAGE THAT'S COMING THROUGH
LOUD AND CLEAR ABOUT CRIME IN NEW JERSEY. IT WILL NOT BE
TOLERATED.

WE WILL DEVOTE THE RESOURCES TO PREVENTING IT.

WE WILL PROVIDE THE POLICEMEN TO STOP IT.

WE WILL INSTITUTE THE SENTENCES TO DETER IT.

AND WE WILL BUILD THE CELLS TO BACK UP OUR SANCTIONS
AGAINST THOSE WHO COMMIT IT.

THERE IS A NEW COMMITMENT TO WINNING THE WAR AGAINST
CRIME IN NEW JERSEY.

THERE IS ANOTHER COMMISSION, ESTABLISHED BY THE
LEGISLATURE, WHICH IS ABOUT TO KICK OFF ITS VITAL WORK. THAT
IS THE COMMISSION TO DETER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY, AND ITS FOCUS

IS TO SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT NEW JERSEY'S MANDATORY SENTENCING LAW FOR CRIMES COMMITTED WITH A GUN -- THE GRAVES ACT.

IN JULY OF THIS YEAR, THE COMMISSION WILL LAUNCH A MAJOR ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN DIRECTED AT THOSE WHO MIGHT THINK ABOUT USING A GUN. THE MESSAGE IS SIMPLE. "USE A GUN. GO TO JAIL. AUTOMATIC."

WE HAVE, IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM, SOME SAMPLES OF THE ADVERTISEMENTS THAT THE COMMISSION WILL BE SPONSORING. TAKE A LOOK AT THEM.

I THINK THEY'LL HELP US STOP CRIMES WITH GUNS.

AND I HOPE THAT YOU'LL ALL LEND YOUR SUPPORT TO THIS VITAL PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.

THOSE ARE NEW STEPS WE ARE TAKING RIGHT NOW, TODAY.

BUT I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DIDN'T MENTION A FEW STEPS THAT HAVE NOT YET BEEN TAKEN -- AND THAT WE DESPERATELY NEED TO TAKE.

EARLIER, I MENTIONED THE NEW FOCUS WE HAVE PLACED ON THE RIGHTS OF CRIME VICTIMS. WELL, THAT FOCUS IS NOT YET COMPLETE.

THERE IS NOW PENDING IN THE LEGISLATURE A COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE OF BILLS -- A BEEFED-UP CRIME VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS -- THAT WILL GO EVEN FURTHER TOWARD ESTABLISHING AND PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF VICTIMS:.

-BY SETTING UP OFFICES OF VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE AND ADVOCACY -- NOT ONLY AT THE STATE LEVEL, BUT OUT IN THE OFFICES OF THE COUNTY PROSECUTORS;

-BY ESTABLISHING MANDATORY RESTITUTION;

-BY AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION TO PROVIDE FOR PREVENTIVE DETENTION OF SPECIAL THREATS TO SOCIETY, SUCH AS THOSE WHO THREATEN VICTIMS AND WITNESSES;

-AND BY TAKING A HOST OF OTHER STEPS TO PROTECT AND COMPENSATE CRIME VICTIMS FOR THE TRAGEDIES THEY HAVE SUFFERED.

MANY OF THESE BILLS HAVE PASSED THE STATE ASSEMBLY.
TODAY, I URGE THE STATE SENATE TO PASS THEM AS WELL. AND I
URGE YOU TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR SENATORS AND ASK THEM TO
MOVE THIS KEY PACKAGE OF VICTIMS' RIGHTS BILLS.

THERE IS AN EVEN MORE PRESSING MATTER THAT IS SCREAMING
FOR THE ATTENTION OF YOUR LEGISLATORS.

WE HAVE ALREADY UNDERTAKEN THE MOST AMBITIOUS PRISON
CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM IN THE STATE'S HISTORY.

BUT WITH OUR TOUGHER SENTENCES AND BETTER ENFORCEMENT,
WE ARE STILL NOT KEEPING PACE WITH THE GROWTH IN THE INMATE
POPULATION.

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, I MADE AN EMERGENCY REQUEST TO THE
LEGISLATURE FOR \$60 MILLION TO BUILD MORE PRISON CELLS.

I WARNED THAT WITHOUT IMMEDIATE ACTION, WE COULD FACE
OVERCROWDING IN THE COUNTIES THIS SUMMER.

YET THE LEGISLATURE HAS STILL NOT ACTED.

THAT \$60 MILLION WOULD ALLOW US TO ADD 1,000 VITALLY
NEEDED CELLSPACES TO OUR PRISON CAPACITY.

WITHOUT THEM, WE COULD FACE THE SAME SITUATION THAT SO MANY OTHER STATES HAVE FACED: THE COURT-ORDERED RELEASE OF PRISONERS FOR LACK OF PRISON SPACE. THAT IS SIMPLY NOT ACCEPTABLE. AND IT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE.

WELL, WE HAVE AN EXCELLENT ALTERNATIVE TO OUR INCARCERATION EFFORT UNDERWAY. BUT OUR DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS FIGURES SHOW THAT APPROXIMATELY 97% OF ALL INMATES IN STATE PRISON ARE EITHER IN FOR VIOLENT CRIMES, HAVE A HISTORY OF VIOLENT CRIME, OR HAVE THE TYPE OF EXTENSIVE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND THAT WOULD PRECLUDE THEM FROM BEING DIVERTED TO COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS.

IN OTHER WORDS, THE NEED FOR MORE CELLS IS REAL. IT IS NEEDED TO KEEP VIOLENT CRIMINALS OFF THE STREETS.

WE CAN TOUGHEN ANTI-CRIME LAWS.

WE CAN STIFFEN SENTENCES.

WE CAN IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT.

BUT ALL OF THAT WON'T STOP CRIME IF THERE IS NO PLACE TO PUT THE CRIMINALS.

AND UNLESS THE LEGISLATURE ACTS -- AND ACTS SOON --
THERE WILL BE NO SUCH PLACE.

THAT IS IRRESPONSIBLE. AND IT DESERVES TO BE CALLED
JUST THAT.

SO THERE IS A LARGE AGENDA BEFORE US, AND THAT IS THE
TOPIC OF TODAY'S CONFERENCE.

THROUGHOUT THE DAY, YOU WILL BE HEARING FROM EXPERTS WHO
WILL LAY OUT THAT AGENDA.

IN A MOMENT, YOU WILL HEAR FROM NEW JERSEY'S TOP LAW
ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS. LATER IN THE DAY, YOU WILL HEAR FROM
EXPERTS IN THE AREAS OF CHILD ABUSE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND
CRIMES AGAINST THE ELDERLY -- AREAS OF CRIME THAT HAVE ONLY
RECENTLY BEEN CLEARLY IDENTIFIED AND SUCCESSFULLY ADDRESSED
BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES; AND AREAS THAT, IN MY VIEW, MUST
RECEIVE MORE OF OUR ATTENTION IN THE FUTURE.

THIS CONFERENCE IS DESIGNED TO PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO
THOSE NEW AREAS. WE WILL EXAMINE REFORMS IN THE CRIMINAL
JUSTICE SYSTEM DESIGNED TO ADDRESS FAMILY VIOLENCE; NEW

PROCEDURES IN LAW ENFORCEMENT; NEW LAWS REQUIRING CITIZENS TO REPORT INCIDENTS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE; AND NEW PROGRAMS TO AID VICTIMS.

WHAT I HOPE WILL EMERGE IS A PICTURE OF HOW ALL OF US-- FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL OFFICIALS, EDUCATORS, SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND CONCERNED CITIZENS -- CAN WORK TOGETHER TO PREVENT FAMILY VIOLENCE. AND HOW WE CAN TEAM UP TO PROTECT SOCIETY'S MOST VULNERABLE MEMBERS: WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND THE ELDERLY.

AFTER OUR SPECIAL LUNCHEON SPEAKER, WE WILL BREAK UP IN TO WORKSHOPS. THOSE WORKSHOPS WILL CONCENTRATE ON THE SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF DEALING WITH THOSE CRIMES THAT WERE ONCE CONSIDERED FAMILY MATTERS -- MATTERS BEYOND THE REACH OF THE LAW, SUCH AS CHILD ABUSE, SPOUSE ABUSE, AND ELDERLY ABUSE.

YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN PANEL DISCUSSIONS DURING THE QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSIONS; BECAUSE WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR IDEAS ABOUT WHAT CAN BE DONE.

TODAY'S CONFERENCE IS AN INFORMATION EXCHANGE; A CHANCE TO BUILD CONTACTS; A CHANCE TO SHARE NEW IDEAS AND NEW PROGRAMS. USE IT, AND TAKE BACK WHAT YOU CAN TO YOUR AREA AND YOUR PROFESSION.

WE HAVE SET UP DISPLAYS FROM OUR STATE POLICE, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS, AND DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY.

THOSE DISPLAYS HAVE PAMPHLETS AND BOOKLETS ON SUCCESSFUL CRIME PREVENTION AND VICTIM ASSISTANCE TECHNIQUES. FEEL FREE TO TAKE THEM -- AND USE THEM.

THIS CONFERENCE ON CRIME IS INTENDED TO BE A WIDE-RANGING AND SOMETIMES FREE-WHEELING DISCUSSION. WE WELCOME YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND I AM ESPECIALLY EXCITED TO SEE SO MUCH INTEREST IN THE SUBJECTS WE ARE GOING TO EXAMINE TODAY.

I THINK THE WAR ON CRIME IN NEW JERSEY IS TURNING A CORNER. WE ARE BECOMING MORE SOPHISTICATED, AND MORE EFFECTIVE IN THE PROCESS.

YOU ARE TO BLAME FOR THAT SUCCESS; AND I THANK YOU FOR
ALL THAT YOU HAVE DONE ALREADY.

AFTER TODAY, LET'S HOPE THAT ALL OF US CAN DO EVEN MORE.

THANK YOU.