

REMARKS
AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

OF

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OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

AT THE

NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT CONFERENCE

ON

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PHILADELPHIA, PA

Thank you, Monique [Howard]. I'm so pleased to be here.

Before I begin, I'd like to take just a moment to send our thoughts, on behalf of the Department of Justice, to the brave members of the Philadelphia police who suffered injuries in last week's brazen attack by a gunman. It seems that almost every day, we hear about a violent assault on a law enforcement officer. Officers across the country sustain scores of assaults every day—more than 60,000 in 2017 alone. But that grim fact doesn't seem to shake the ranks of our law enforcement professionals, who report to work each day, willing to stand in the line of fire.

In his remarks last week to the Fraternal Order of Police, Attorney General Barr said, "there is no more noble profession than serving as a police officer. [They] put their own life and well-being on the line to protect [their] communities." "Even in the best of times," he went on to say, "there is no tougher calling than serving as a police officer." "It calls for a special kind of bravery."

The remarkable courage he described was on full display last week here in Philadelphia, and we are in awe of it. Our terrific U.S. Attorney, William McSwain, made it clear that his office is investigating the shootings, and I can assure you that the Department of Justice is doing everything in its power to make sure that justice is done.

It's a real privilege to be here with you today. I want to thank Monique and all the wonderful people at the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, as well as the great staff of the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. I want to thank you for having me, but more importantly, for being such outstanding and visionary leaders in the ongoing fight against sexual assault.

This is a fight that I've been part of my entire career, from my time as a Deputy District Attorney, when I worked with law enforcement and victim advocates on our community-based domestic violence task force. Then, in my 11 years as a state trial court judge, where I heard some 45,000 cases, many of them—way too many of them—domestic violence- and sexual assault-related. And finally, to my service in the Trump Administration, first as acting director of the Office on Violence Against Women and now as head of the Justice Department's largest grant-making agency, the Office of Justice Programs. I am proud to have worked in the trenches, and to have known so many good and dedicated people—many right here in this room—who have done so much to shine a light on this issue.

We're making progress, and there is much to celebrate:

- Sexual assault services are reaching more victims than ever. More than 340,000 victims of sexual assault receive services from programs funded by our Office for Victims of Crime every quarter.
- Sexual offenders are being held to account. Sexual violence has fallen by more than half since 1993, yet the percentage of sexual assaults reported to police continues to rise – from 23 percent in 2016 to 40 percent in 2017.

- And sexual violence is being taken seriously as the terrible violation that it is. We have exposed the rationalizations for predatory behavior, we have empowered victims to come forward and we have sent a strong and clear message that sexual assault will not be tolerated. You have done this, and you should all be proud.

As you know, we still have work to do. Americans were victims of almost 300,000 sexual assaults in 2016, according to our Bureau of Justice Statistics. And three in four sexual assaults go unreported to police. Most victims get neither the services they need, nor the justice they deserve. We simply cannot accept this.

Our Attorney General does not accept it. He's working day and night to make sure our nation's crime-fighters and service providers have the resources they need to take criminals off the street and get victims the best help available. I am fortunate enough to be in a position to help him do that. At the Office of Justice Programs, we are directing our grants, our training dollars and our research expertise to the organizations that can make a difference in the fight against sexual violence.

Thanks to record amounts of funding available from our Office for Victims of Crime—\$4.4 billion last year and another \$3.3 billion this year—we are supporting more than 7,000 local victim assistance programs across the country. We are also supporting state victim compensation programs, which paid out about \$86 million in claims to sexual assault victims last year. In fact, almost half of all victim compensation claims went to victims of sexual assault.

Our resources are helping in other ways, too:

- Last year, thanks to a grant to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, we released an updated Sexual Assault Response Team toolkit that was written and reviewed by experts and survivors.
- We are helping to expand the availability of telehealth technology to reach victims in rural and tribal areas that don't have direct access to services. Our Office for Victims of Crime plans to award \$18 million under a new telehealth initiative this year.
- Speaking of tribes, under a new first-ever tribal set-aside program, last year we awarded more than \$17 million to 31 tribes specifically to serve victims of sexual assault in Indian country.
- We're serving victims of human trafficking. In a one-year period from mid-2017 to mid-2018, programs funded by our Office for Victims of Crime reported serving nearly 9,000 victims of sex and labor trafficking.
- And through our National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative, we have awarded \$159 million to dozens of state and local jurisdictions to address the crisis of untested sexual assault kits. Grant recipients have inventoried more than 70,000 kits and sent more than 50,000 to labs for testing. More than 16,000 of those kits produced a DNA profile that could be entered into FBI's Combined DNA Index System, and nearly half resulted in a match with other CODIS entries. SAKI has also been

critical in closing dozens of sexually motivated homicides committed by Samuel Little, who murdered 93 women over the course of four decades.

We're working very hard, on many fronts, to reach victims of sexual assault, and to support the thousands of dedicated service providers across the nation working on their behalf. But we know we have a long way to go before we can claim victory in this fight. I hope you know that you have friends at the Department of Justice who are supporting you, and fighting for victims, and doing everything we can to reduce sexual violence in this country.

It has been an honor to join you today, and I look forward to continuing our work together.

Thank you.

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