

Teleconference Remarks Announcing Community Policing Grants May 15, 1996

The President. Hello.

Mayor Willie Brown. Mr. President, Willie Brown, California.

The President. Hello, Mayor.

Mayor Brown. How are you?

The President. You're getting good press over here on the East Coast. [Laughter]

Mayor Brown. You're getting better press than I'm getting.

The President. I don't know about that.

Well, I'm glad you're all on the phone. As I think you know, today we are providing more law enforcement dollars to more communities than on any other single day in the history of this country. And in addition to all of you, I'm also here with your colleague John Norquist, the Mayor of Milwaukee. He happened to be in town today, so I asked him to come in and sit with me as I announce that today we are putting almost 9,000 new police officers on the street.

Mayor Brown. Outstanding.

The President. That will bring our total to 43,000 new police officers since I signed the crime bill into law just 20 months ago. That means we're running well ahead of schedule in reaching our goal of putting 100,000 new police officers on the street.

This afternoon I will attend the annual ceremony at the Peace Officers Memorial, and we will honor the memory of the 161 officers who were killed in the line of duty last year.

We now, on this schedule that we're on, we are not only well ahead of schedule, we were prepared to put 100,000 police on the street in 5 years. We're now at 43,000 in 20 months. We're also under budget, and it's helping all of you to make our streets safer and to decrease crime.

We have just learned, I'm sure all of you know, that serious crimes have decreased for the 4th year in a row, including an 8 percent drop in the murder rate. Community policing has a lot to do with this, and I congratulate all of you who have, each in your own way, implemented it, helping to get officers back on the street and involved in the community and working as positive role models and preventing crime as well as catching criminals.

And I want to pledge to you that I will continue to work with you and continue to challenge the American people to work with you. When I was at Penn State last week delivering the commencement address, I urged the American people to join neighborhood crime watch groups and to do other things that would support community policing. And I hope that we will see a big increase in the number of citizens who are supporting our common efforts now.

Let me call on a couple of you, starting with Mayor Riordan. I know your community policing efforts have made a big difference, especially your public-private partnership encouraging businesses to play a role in keeping communities safer. And I'm glad that you will be getting 710 new officers.

Mayor?

[*Mayor Richard Riordan of Los Angeles, CA, thanked the President for his vote of confidence in the city's police department and explained how the increase in officers and community policing programs had helped to prevent and fight crime in his city.*]

The President. Thank you very much. And I appreciate that, Mayor Riordan. I appreciate what you're doing.

I'd like to now call on Mayor Mike White in Cleveland. I understand that the help you've gotten from the police program has helped you to permit police officers to live within the neighborhood they patrol and make them a more vital part of the community. And that's a very intriguing idea and an old-fashioned idea, I'm sure, that still works very well. And as you know, Cleveland will be getting more police officers today as well. And so, Mr. Mayor, we would like to hear from you.

[*Mayor Michael R. White thanked the President for his commitment to reducing the crime rate and explained how community policing programs had helped to lower crime in Cleveland by 16 percent in the last 5 years.*]

The President. Thank you very much, Mayor White. And I want to thank the others who are on the line. Let me just call your names and make sure I've got everybody.

Mayor Herenton of Memphis?

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Mayor Willie W. Herenton. Yes, Mr. President.

The President. Vice Mayor Sharp of Knoxville?

Vice Mayor Jack Sharp. Yes, sir.

The President. Mayor Corradini of Salt Lake?

Mayor Deedee Corradini. I'm here.

The President. And Mayor Delaney of Jacksonville?

Mayor John A. Delaney. Right here, Mr. President.

The President. Mayor Greco of Tampa?

Mayor Dick A. Greco. Thank you, Mr. President. We all thank you here.

The President. Mayor Bosley of St. Louis?

Mayor Freeman R. Bosley, Jr. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. I'll see you tomorrow, won't I?

Mayor Bosley. Yes.

The President. The day after tomorrow.

Mayor Bosley. Right.

The President. Mayor James of Newark?

Mayor Sharpe James. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Mayor Finkbeiner of Toledo?

Mayor Carty Finkbeiner. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. And Mayor Lanier of Houston, is he on the phone?

Participant. He's stuck in city council. [Laughter]

The President. And Sheriff Glover of Jacksonville county, are you on the phone?

Sheriff Nathaniel Glover. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. And of course, Mayor Brown. I said hello to you earlier.

Mayor Brown. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. I thank all of you very much, and I know you will do a lot with these 43,000 additional officers to make the streets of America safer. Thank you very much.

Goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:57 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Willie Brown of San Francisco, CA, and Sheriff Nathaniel Glover of Duval County, FL.

Remarks at the National Peace Officers Memorial Service May 15, 1996

Thank you very much, Gil Gallegos, for your introduction, your leadership, and your very moving remarks. Thank you, Karen Lippe, Senator Daschle, Senator Biden, Attorney General Reno, Secretary Rubin, General McCaffrey, distinguished leaders of law enforcement, and the supporters of law enforcement who are here. To all the family members who are here, and especially to the families who lost the life of someone you loved because that person was willing to risk his or her life to protect the rest of us, I say thank you from a grateful nation. Thank you for your strength, your courage, and your sacrifice. We are all forever in your debt.

I am proud to stand with you today to honor the memory and the lives of the more than 170 men and women who died for their country last year in the service of law enforcement, who died for law, for order, for justice, and for peace. They were American heroes.

When I joined you last year on this very difficult day, it was not even a month since the bombing in Oklahoma City revealed to all of us the evil of which some people are capable. Today, eight Federal law enforcement officers who lost their lives on that dark day join their brothers and sisters on the memorial wall.

As the shock waves from the bombing reverberated across our Nation, thousands of Americans dropped whatever they were doing and went to help. One of them was a deputy sheriff in Milledgeville, Georgia, named Will Robinson. He worked all day and all night cooking meals for emergency workers and volunteers, doing whatever he could to help. That's what he was all about. That's why he went into law enforcement, to help. That's why he was planning to dress up as Santa Claus and play with kids in prekindergarten last Christmas, just like he did the year before. He wanted the children to have some fun and to know that police officers are people you can count on.