

REMARKS

OF

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PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

AT THE

PRESS EVENT AT THE TAMPA POLICE DEPARTMENT TO
ANNOUNCE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION
GRANTS TO FLORIDA

ON

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2019
TAMPA, FL

Thank you. It's wonderful to be here in Tampa. I want to thank Mayor Castor, Chief Dugan and Pam Iorio for allowing me to join them today in their beautiful city. I would also like to recognize Joel McKee, one of this city's outstanding law enforcement officers and an incredible member of the Bigs in Blue program here in Tampa. And a big shout-out to Princeton, an amazing Little Brother from Pizzo Elementary School. Princeton, we're so glad you and your mother could be here today.

I bring greetings from our Attorney General, Bill Barr, who sends his congratulations and his thanks to the dedicated men and women who protect Tampa's communities and serve the city's youth. Let me also extend my thanks to the outstanding U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Florida, Maria Chapa Lopez. Although she's unable to be here today, Ms. Chapa Lopez does an outstanding job looking out for the people of central Florida, and we are grateful for her service as the top federal law enforcement official in her district.

It is my privilege to be here today, on behalf of the Attorney General, to announce substantial investments in the safety of Florida's communities, and especially in the safety of Florida's young people. I am proud to announce awards totaling \$291 million in public safety grants to agencies and organizations across the great state of Florida. These grants cover everything from supporting Florida's great law enforcement professionals to serving crime victims, fighting domestic and sexual violence and strengthening the state's criminal and juvenile justice systems. I am especially pleased that almost \$27 million will go to support activities designed to protect children and keep at-risk youth on the path to positive growth.

I am so glad that Pam Iorio could be here today. Her wonderful organization, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, will receive almost \$11 million to support youth mentoring in Florida and throughout the country. Much of that funding will be used to mentor kids caught up in the opioid crisis, which has destroyed far too many lives and left too many young people feeling helpless and hopeless. We look forward to seeing the difference that Pam and her team—and Big Brothers Big Sisters programs across the country—will make in the lives of these youth.

Above and beyond the mentoring grants, funding to the state will support gang prevention activities and help schools and law enforcement agencies protect students from school violence. We are also supporting Florida's three outstanding Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces. These three task forces are part of a nationwide network of law enforcement agencies that are working hard, every day, to investigate online child exploitation, track down predators and rescue innocent children from the vilest forms of abuse.

We are proud to make this funding available to the great public safety and community service professionals throughout Florida. And we are just as proud that more funding opportunities will be made available in fiscal year 2020. The Justice Department's three grant-making agencies—the Office of Justice Programs, the COPS Office and the Office on Violence Against Women—are working on new grant

solicitations, which we will be posting on the grants.gov website over the coming months.

Although we are so pleased to make these resources available, we don't pretend that federal funding alone will make Florida's kids and communities safer. That job falls to the brave men and women who enforce the law, and it falls to amazing organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters that work every day to create a better future for our youth.

No one understands this better than Attorney General Barr, and no one is as focused on giving our state and local professionals the tools they need.

I know that passion and that commitment are shared by Tampa's leaders, Mayor Castor, who is herself a former police chief, and Chief Dugan—two people who I know care deeply about the safety of this city. I am so grateful to them, to Pam Iorio and her team and to all those who work so hard on behalf of the residents of Tampa and all the citizens of Florida. We are proud to be your partners.

Thank you all.

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