

REMARKS  
AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

OF

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PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

AT THE

ANNOUNCEMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE GRANTS TO WEST  
VIRGINIA

ON

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2019  
CHARLESTON, WV

Thank you, Joe [Thornton]. It's wonderful to be here in Charleston. Thank you, Ann [Urling], for hosting us today and for your warm welcome on behalf of Governor Justice. We're so grateful for his commitment to the safety of the citizens of West Virginia.

I also want to thank our outstanding U.S. Attorneys, Mike Stuart and William Powell, for all the outstanding work they do to protect the people of their districts. Thank you both for joining us. And thanks, as well, to our colleagues from Capitol Hill. Senator Manchin, Representative Mooney and Representative Miller are all represented here today by members of their staff. Thank you all for coming.

And I want to recognize my fantastic colleague, Tracey Trautman. Tracey leads our Bureau of Justice Assistance, which is one of the funding offices in my agency. Tracey's office is responsible for many of the financial resources we're here to talk about today.

I bring greetings and thanks to everyone here from our Attorney General, Bill Barr. He is deeply grateful to the brave crime-fighters and public health professionals who work so hard to keep West Virginia's communities safe and healthy. No one understands the value of your service more than our Attorney General, and no one is more firmly committed to supporting you.

It is an honor to be here today to announce substantial federal investments in the safety of West Virginia's communities. I'm proud that the Department of Justice is awarding nearly \$38 million in public safety grants to agencies and organizations across the great state of West Virginia. These grants cover a wide range of activities:

- They will support West Virginia's amazing law enforcement professionals;
- they will help serve crime victims across the state—funding to West Virginia's great Victims of Crime Act program will support dozens of local victim service programs across the state;
- they will aid in the fight against domestic and sexual violence; and
- they will strengthen state and local criminal and juvenile justice systems.

I am especially pleased that a healthy portion of this funding—almost \$8 million—will go toward combating the opioid crisis. As we all know, West Virginia has been hit hard by this crisis. No state, in fact, has been hit harder. The pain is being felt in every corner—in the families torn apart by addiction, in the kids orphaned by this epidemic and in the brave first responders who place themselves in harm's way when they arrive on the scene of an overdose.

The grants we're announcing today will fund programs like the state's superb Handle With Care initiative, which serves children who are exposed to trauma and violence. They will expand the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion, or LEAD, program that steers low-level drug offenders into treatment and other supportive services. And they will provide telehealth services like counseling and medication assisted treatment to

people in underserved communities in the state. We're also awarding locally-based grants that will support mental health services for at-risk youth and help hire peer recovery coaches.

These awards are part of an overall investment in fighting opioids and other drugs throughout the country. The Justice Department is awarding a total of more than \$333 million in fiscal year 2019 grants to support programs like drug courts, victim services and youth mentoring and partnerships between law enforcement agencies and treatment providers—all designed to fight drug abuse and reduce drug-related crime.

And we know that opioids are not the only public safety challenge here in West Virginia. The grants we're announcing today will also support school safety initiatives, law enforcement hiring, domestic violence and sexual assault services, inmate reentry, DNA analysis, youth mentoring and programs that combat online child exploitation and manage sex offenders.

We're proud to make these grants available to the great public safety and community service professionals throughout West Virginia. And we're proud that more funding opportunities will be available in fiscal year 2020. We are hard at work on new grant solicitations that will be posted on the grants.gov website over the coming months.

We are so pleased to make these resources available, but we don't pretend that federal funding alone will make West Virginia's communities safer. That job falls to the brave men and women who enforce the law. And it falls to amazing treatment providers and service organizations that work every day to fight crime and drugs.

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 Governor Justice and his staff, and by our terrific U.S. Attorneys. I am so grateful to them and to all those who work so hard on behalf of the people of West Virginia. We are proud to be your partners.

Thank you all.

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