

REMARKS
AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

OF

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AT THE

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY
“NIJ HIGHLIGHTS: A DISCUSSION WITH THE DIRECTOR
AND THE PRESIDENTS OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY AND
THE ACADEMY OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SCIENCES”

ON

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WASHINGTON, DC

Good morning. My name is Karol Mason, and I'm the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs in the Department of Justice. I'm very pleased to welcome all of you to this conversation. We have with us three distinguished criminologists: My colleague – the Director of the National Institute of Justice – Nancy Rodriguez; Candace Kruttschnitt, the President of the American Society of Criminology; and Brandon Applegate, the President of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.

I want to thank Candace and ASC for hosting this discussion and for giving me the chance to say a few preliminary words. I'd like to say, first of all, how proud I am of the work that the National Institute of Justice has played and continues to play in expanding our base of knowledge about crime and justice in the United States. A great deal of the seminal research in criminal justice over the years has come out of NIJ, and Nancy and her team continue to advance our understanding of crime, its causes, and ways we can combat it.

I'm especially proud of NIJ's commitment to integrating research into practice. NIJ was established to guide criminal justice professionals in their day-to-day work, and this is a role it has filled admirably. Today, the demand for their leadership – and for the leadership of ASC and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences – is greater than ever.

Within the last decade, we've seen a much fuller embrace of science as a driver of policy in the criminal and juvenile justice fields. Former Attorney General Eric Holder and our current Attorney General, Loretta Lynch, have been leading a steady drumbeat of data and research, and evidence now informs everything we do at the Office of Justice Programs – from victim services and juvenile justice reform to pretrial justice and violence reduction.

And with NIJ in the lead, we're working to help build a more effective and more equitable justice system by demonstrating that safety and fairness are not mutually exclusive, but in fact go hand in hand. The President's push for criminal justice reform – which is one of his top domestic priorities – is based on the notion, grounded in procedural justice research, that community safety greatly depends on our confidence in the institutions set up to protect us. Through our National Initiative on Building Community Trust and Justice, we've created a forum for getting this knowledge out to practitioners so that justice system agencies can begin working to strengthen ties with the citizens they serve. NIJ is right in the center of all this work – and no one understands better than Nancy the central role of science in achieving that aim.

We've generated a great deal of momentum, and in order to build on that momentum, I think there are a few things we need to pay attention to.

First, we need to be clear about what it is that we in the research domain hope to achieve. What are our goals, what kind of an impact do we want to make, and how can we use science to generate reform?

Second, how can we maximize our investments? In an era of limited resources, where do we target our priorities, and how do we diversify our research portfolios without diluting our impact?

Third, how can we foster and sustain researcher-practitioner partnerships? And how do we bring in new and different perspectives?

And finally, how do we attract and support up-and-coming scholars? What's the best way to guarantee the longevity of the field of criminology?

These are all questions I know Nancy has thought long and hard about. I know she, Candace, and Brandon are eager to share their ideas and to hear your questions and comments. I, too, am looking forward to what I'm sure will be an engaging discussion about the role of science in criminal justice and the part we can all play in integrating research into the foundation of our policies and programs.

I'll now turn it over to my colleague, the Director of the National Institute of Justice, Dr. Nancy Rodriguez.

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