

REMARKS

OF

THE HONORABLE KAROL V. MASON
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

AT THE

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIM SERVICE AWARDS CEREMONY

ON

TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2016
WASHINGTON, DC

Thank you, Joye [Frost]. I'm very pleased to join you and Attorney General Lynch for this celebration of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. And I'm grateful to David Ferriero and the staff of the National Archives for once again hosting our ceremony.

I'm proud to be here with so many leaders from throughout the Department of Justice and from across the victims field as we honor the most committed, creative, and courageous people working on behalf of crime victims in America. Their work – reflected in the extraordinary accomplishments that you will hear about today – has done so much to advance the cause of victims' rights and services, and it has helped to make our country a more just, a more hopeful, and a more compassionate place.

I want to thank Joye and her phenomenal team for all they've done to make this event possible, and for the outstanding work they do throughout the year. And I thank our Attorney General, who – by her presence here today and through her actions every day – sends a clear signal that the Department of Justice stands with crime victims.

We've chosen a theme that reflects our solidarity with those who have been victimized – “Serving Victims. Building Trust. Restoring Hope.” We know that the effectiveness and integrity of our criminal justice system depend on trust. Faith in the aims and actions of the law is vital to public safety. Without it, true justice remains out of reach.

For crime victims, trust is not an abstract or impersonal notion. It is the very key to recovery. Under the leadership of Attorney General Lynch, the Department of Justice and the Office of Justice Programs are working to help our justice system reclaim the trust of our citizens, victims and survivors foremost among them. Under OVC's Vision 21 initiative, Joye and her staff – and their many partners – are working hard to make sure that victim service programs and the criminal justice field as a whole have their sights on regaining the confidence of the victims and survivors they serve.

This means giving victims – all victims – timely access to quality services. The fact is, far too many crime victims don't have a place they can go for help and support. This is particularly true in urban areas, especially among young people of color, and in rural areas like Indian country, where resources are spread thin and victims sometimes have to travel hundreds of miles for even the most basic medical attention.

Gaining victims' trust also hinges on delivering the most effective services, which in turn depends on having the best information about what works. That's why Vision 21 is centered on expanding our base of knowledge through research and data. For too long, we've known too little about what victims really need or what's available.

I'm proud that Joye and her counterparts in our Bureau of Justice Statistics and National Institute of Justice are working together to change that. Through new data collection efforts and a robust research program, they're building a solid body of victim-

related evidence that will enable advocates and service providers to reach more victims and provide even better services.

As we expand the number and quality of services and gain victims' trust, our ultimate aim is to restore hope – hope for victims that recovery is possible and that justice – true justice – is attainable. I'm excited about the work we're doing, and I'm excited about where the victims field stands today. In spite of the challenges, we are making progress, we are generating momentum – and I know that our successes will continue to build on each other. I'm proud of all that we've achieved together, and proud to count each and every one of you as partners. Keep up your outstanding work, and thank you for all that you do.

It's now my honor to introduce our keynote speaker, and the Department of Justice's chief victim advocate.

Throughout her career, Loretta Lynch has fought hard on behalf of those who have been victimized. Her work to combat human trafficking exemplifies her deep personal commitment to supporting victims and survivors, a commitment that continues with her service as our nation's Attorney General. She has traveled to every region of this country and to many parts of the world carrying this message: We will not tolerate the injustices and indignities being perpetrated on our citizens, and we will take care of those who have suffered.

We're fortunate to have Attorney General Lynch on our side, and it's my privilege to introduce her to you today. Please welcome Attorney General Loretta Lynch.

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