

REMARKS
AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

OF

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AT THE

OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING

ON

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WASHINGTON, DC

Thank you, Katherine [Darke-Schmitt]. Good morning. It's a pleasure to have a chance to meet with the Office of Justice Programs Science Advisory Board and to start putting some faces to names. Your reputations, both individually and collectively, precede you. On behalf of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice, I want to thank you for the contributions you've made thus far to criminal justice science and for your continued service as members of the Board.

I'd also like to welcome four new Board members – John Creuzot, Ebony Hall, Bernie Warner and Patricia Lee. Welcome to all of you; we're glad to have you as part of this distinguished body.

I think it's important that I emphasize from the start how much I, and we in the Department, care about science. I, myself, am a lawyer, but I have an undergraduate degree in engineering, so while I'm not a scientist by profession or graduate training, I do have a STEM background and, with that, an immense appreciation and respect for the scientific enterprise.

I also believe strongly in the objective reporting of scientific findings. OJP has made vital contributions to our knowledge about what works in public safety, and it's critical that we share that information with the field. There's a proud tradition of scientific integrity at OJP, and I fully intend to continue that tradition.

I also recognize that our evidence generating functions extend beyond the National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Our program offices, in particular the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, have their own research and data collection efforts. The Office for Victims of Crime and our SMART Office also dedicate substantial resources to evidence-based initiatives. It should be a source of pride for OJP, and for the Department of Justice as a whole, that an ethic of science informs all our programmatic work.

I want to emphasize that reducing crime and strengthening our criminal justice system are top priorities of our Attorney General. He understands that crime remains at historically low levels, but he's very concerned about recent increases in violence in some of our cities. He believes it's our role at the Department to prevent these one- or two-year spikes from becoming lasting trends.

That's why, pursuant to the President's executive order, he's set up a task force on crime reduction and public safety. OJP is playing a key role in organizing the task force, and we're involved in putting together a crime reduction summit that we'll be hosting at the end of June. The summit's primary objectives are to hear about successful local public safety efforts, solicit recommendations and determine how we at the federal level can support those efforts. I expect our research and data to play a key role.

But even beyond the summit and the task force, I see the Science Advisory Board as central to advancing the work that OJP was created to do. Regardless of who's sitting on the fifth floor at Main Justice, or in the White House, the Department of Justice has a

core mission – that is, to uphold the rule of law and ensure that justice is administered fairly and impartially.

I believe – and the Attorney General believes – that basing our actions in evidence and sound science is the best way to fulfill this mission. That’s why your role is so important. You are a link – a critical link – to the professionals in the field who protect our communities. We will continue to look to you for your guidance and wisdom on how we can best support them.

I’m new here, obviously, and I’m eager to hear your thoughts on the direction of criminal justice science and on the role OJP can play in cementing evidence in our nation’s public safety practices. Thank you again for your time, and for your service, and I look forward to the discussion.

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