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Speech by Attorney General, on signi. of the agreement

The children of America are our most precious possession. How we treat them predicts our future. How we guide them is a measure of our abilities as government officials, parents, teachers and concerned citizens.

Young people must be held accountable when they commit a crime. They must learn that you can't put a gun up besides someone's head + rob them + get away with it.

Yet, we cannot give up on the children we place in the juvenile justice system. Because they are coming back to our communities. We cannot fail to educate them + treat their ill. To fail to do so is ~~an~~ inhumane - and it is penny wise + pound foolish ~~it doesn't solve the problem~~. If we return our delinquents to the streets without giving them the case + tools to cope they will be back in the system again. ~~if learning + coping they will commit further crimes, they will be unemployed they are a burden on our society, on economy + on medical institutions.~~

in



U.S. v. Georgia

JI-GA-002-006

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~~BUT I HAVE ALSO URGED PEOPLE TO RECOGNIZE THAT IN
MANY CASES THESE CHILDREN ARE COMING BACK TO
THE COMMUNITY -- ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. WE OWE IT
TO THEM AND TO THE COMMUNITY TO MAKE SURE THEY
HAVE A CHANCE TO SUCCEED WHEN THEY RETURN.~~

IF THEY DON'T ACQUIRE THE PROPER SKILLS, IF THEY
DON'T RECEIVE THE PROPER EDUCATION, IF THEY DON'T
LEARN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG,
AND AREN'T TREATED WITH BASIC DIGNITY, THEN THEY

~~^{run high} RISKS BECOMING STATISTICS IN THE REVOLVING DOOR C~~

~~JUVENILE JUSTICE. of committing further
crime, or of being jobless + a burden
on us all or ill + a charge to all taxpayers.~~

~~We need adequate punishment.~~

(MORE)

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to our young in firm, fair ways that fit the cr
and that held them accountable. At
the same time we must pave the way
for each child to have a stronger + (+)
future - crime free, self sufficient +
contributing.

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~~INSTEAD, WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT THE JUVENILE
JUSTICE SYSTEM FINDS WAYS TO SET THEM STRAIGHT
AND IN THE PROCESS, PROVIDES THEM WITH BASIC
CONSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS OF CARE.~~

TODAY'S AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF GEORGIA
SHOWS THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND THE
STATE OF GEORGIA CAN BE PARTNERS IN THAT MISSION

LAST FEBRUARY WE BEGAN INVESTIGATING CONDITIONS
AT JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITIES IN THE STATE.

EVERY STEP OF THE WAY THE STATE COOPERATED.

State Officials
THEY LET US IN. THEY GOT US COPIES OF RECORDS.

AND THEY LET US TALK TO ALL CONCERNED.

(MORE)

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WHEN OUR INVESTIGATION WAS COMPLETE, WE INFORMED THE STATE OF OUR FINDINGS. AND RATHER THAN JUMPING TO DEFEND THE FLAWS IN THE SYSTEM, THE STATE IMMEDIATELY SET OUT TO CORRECT THEM.

~~CERTAINLY~~ WE FOUND SOME PROBLEMS. BUT BILL LANN LEE -- WHO HEADS THE CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION -- ~~KNEW~~ ^{SET} ~~OUT TO RESOLVE~~ ^{THE STATE'S RESPONSE HAS BEEN RESPONSIVE} WE COULD WORK THEM ~~OUT~~. WHAT ~~THEY~~ DID, TOGETHER WITH STATE OFFICIALS, WAS REMARKABLE. THEY ~~would~~ SPOTTED A PROBLEM, DISCUSSED WAYS TO RESOLVE IT AND IN ONLY ONE MONTH, WORKED OUT AN AGREEMENT THAT WILL BENEFIT ALL THE PEOPLE OF GEORGIA. IT IS THE KIND OF COOPERATION ^{NEGOTIATION} AND PROBLEM SOLVING THAT SHOULD OCCUR IN EVERY CASE.

(MORE)

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We found some problems. But I
am so proud of how the Department
& the State have worked together
to resolve them. Lawyers from the Dept of Justice
~~Civil Rights Division~~ led by Bill Lamm
In the head of the Civil Rights Division
worked with State officials who have
been negligent to resolve the
problems. This joint effort has
been remarkable. They would ~~spot~~
identify each problem, talk it out &
resolve it. In only 1 month they
have worked out an agreement
that will benefit ~~the~~ the youth &
in custody & the people of Georgia.
The negotiations, discussion & ~~an~~ do
approach evidenced by the lawyers
involved I think are models for all
lawyers & I want to commend &
thank everyone who was involved.
Lawyers whenever possible should be
problem solvers & peace keepers

~~7~~ 7

NOW THOUSANDS OF YOUNGSTERS IN MORE THAN 30 FACILITIES ACROSS GEORGIA HAVE A BETTER CHANCE TO TURN THEIR LIVES AROUND.

FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS AS ATTORNEY GENERAL, I HAVE TALKED ABOUT CHILDREN COMING INTO THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM WHO HAVE NO SENSE OF REMORSE -- NO SENSE THAT THEY'VE DONE SOMETHING WRONG. SO I HAVE STRESSED THE NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS AIMED AT THE YOUNGEST OFFENDERS. PROGRAMS THAT LET THEM KNOW THERE A CERTAIN PUNISHMENT FOR WHAT THEY DO -- PUNISHMENT THAT FITS THE CRIME.

(MORE)

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TODAY'S AGREEMENT WILL ENSURE THAT THE STATE PROVIDES BASIC, MINIMUM STANDARDS OF CARE, AS WELL AS ADEQUATE EDUCATIONAL, MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

~~I HAVE VISITED JUVENILE FACILITIES WHERE YOUNG OFFENDERS WERE PREPARING TO GO TO COLLEGE -- LOOKING TO A FUTURE WHERE THEY COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE. IT SHOULD BE NO DIFFERENT IN ANY ONE OF THE FACILITIES IN GEORGIA.~~

WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE ENTERING THESE CENTERS COME OUT WILLING TO GIVE BACK TO SOCIETY -- RATHER THAN EAGER TO GET BACK AT IT. TODAY'S AGREEMENT DOES JUST THAT. THANK YOU.