



“This is a complicated issue, those of us who have dealt with it for a long time know that when our children’s children are here in this country there will still be crime. There has always been violence in America. We know that crime is somehow related to the combined deterioration of the economy and the social structures that affect so many millions of our people — what has happened to our communities, and to our families. But we know that somehow it is raging out of control now in ways that no civilized society should accept. Surely our country does not have to be the most violent on earth with the largest percentage of its people behind bars of any nation on earth. And when you hear people like Kathy Gold and Sarah Brady talk, you ask yourself — have we done all we can? And if we haven’t, how can we sleep tonight?”

...We ought to have a hundred thousand more police officers on the street. Thirty years ago there were three police officers in this country for every serious crime. Today there are three serious crimes for every police officer. And yet we are organized in such a way that over fifty percent of all arrests are made by police officers in their first three years on the beat.

It is time for America to make a serious commitment to community policing. To having people back on the beat working the same neighborhoods. Making relationships with people in ways that prevent crime as well as expedite the handling of criminal cases. It cannot be done without greater resources. With greater resources, it can be done. I have seen crime rates go down in certain neighborhoods in New York City for the first time in thirty six years after community policing. I’ve seen it in Philadelphia. I’ve seen a fifteen percent drop in the crime rate in the city of Houston after over six-hundred-and-fifty new police officers were added to the beat through prevention.

But it cannot work unless the resources are there. How will the federal government provide one hundred thousand more police officers? First of all, by getting a crime bill passed instead of killing it, that has funds for people all over. Secondly, by embracing the suggestion of Senator Sam Nunn, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, that we downscale the military and we give properly trained and certified men and women coming out of the military the opportunity to continue to earn their military retirement by doing law enforcement work here at home. And thirdly by embracing and expanding the concept of the national police corps. Giving people the opportunity to work off their college loans. If they are properly certified police officers and work for two years at reduced pay, let them wipe out a four year college loan. I think those three things could help us to prevent crime and make our streets safer without in any way undermining the quality of law enforcement in America.

...I think we ought to do more for the communities that are hardest hit. And that’s not only big communities, but smaller communities. Some in my state would qualify. But we ought to help. To organize extra efforts with extra help to bring together citizens’ task forces, tenant management projects in the public housing facilities, school education programs, and other things that will be more intensely focused on the areas where drugs are in greatest use, and where, therefore, violence and the threat to children is greatest.

And finally I want the federal government to begin to help with the Safe Schools Initiative. Years ago, the federal government’s main involvement with local law enforcement was equipment - to give radios, or other equipment. Now what we need is more metal detectors in our schools, and more security forces there, and a common effort to get uniform policies on searches and things of that kind, and federal matching funds to help to bring mentors and others into the schools to try and deal with these problems. If no other part of a dangerous neighborhood in a dangerous city can be safe, the schools ought to be safe and drug free.”