

REMARKS OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC COACHES ASSOCIATION  
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Usually, I speak to lawyers, judges, sheriffs, investigators, police -- those involved in some way with law and law enforcement. It is a pleasure to have a change of pace, and in this instance to address those who coach our high school students.

As you know, there is a reason I am here -- the problem of illegal drugs. The United States now has the highest rate of illegal drug use of any developed nation in the world. To put the problem in human terms, as each day passes some 5,000 Americans will sniff their first line of cocaine. Consider that by the time I finish my next few sentences, another American will have used cocaine for the first time.

Americans' massive drug use has effects in the workplace, in school and on the playing field, in family life -- almost everywhere, it seems. And trafficking in drugs, cocaine in particular, has become the most lucrative underworld venture.

At the risk of sounding like an economist, the problem of illegal drugs may be broken down into two parts, the supply side, and the demand side.

The supply side concerns the drugs themselves -- the plants from which they derive; the processing and making of the drugs; their movement and trade, both internationally and within the United States; and the crime and criminal enterprises with which they typically are associated. Law enforcement aims its efforts primarily at the supply side. In the past four years the Reagan administration has dramatically increased the federal effort in this respect.

In 1981, we brought the Federal Bureau of Investigation, for the first time, into the fight against drug trafficking. That same year we successfully sought modification of federal law in order to bring our military into the fight. Since 1981 we have substantially increased the resources of the Department of Justice by adding almost 2,000 new investigators and prosecutors, most of whom are involved primarily in the drug enforcement effort.

We also have established twelve Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces -- teams of investigators and prosecutors drawn from all the relevant federal law enforcement agencies, which work in cooperation with local and state authorities. Since becoming fully operational last year, these task forces have initiated more than 600 cases and indicted more than 2600 individuals, already convicting more than 700. The principal defendants in these cases are from the highest levels of narcotics trafficking organizations. They include not only drug financiers, smugglers, and distributors, but physicians, bankers, and public employees -- persons of public reputation.

We have the authority -- and we are using it -- to seize and forfeit the property and assets acquired in the illegal drug trade. In 1983 we seized property and assets totaling \$205 million, and this year the figure will be substantially higher. Our aim is to take the profit out of drug trafficking.

In the increasingly international character of the drug trade, we have greatly expanded the federal effort overseas. The Department of Justice has been developing close working relationships at the highest levels with the governments of countries that are the source of illegal drugs or through which these drugs travel. The Department has negotiated and will continue to negotiate mutual assistance law enforcement and extradition treaties with these countries. And the Department has been working successfully to reduce the supply and processing of drugs through crop control and eradication programs.

So far, I have focused my remarks on the supply side of the drug problem. We in law enforcement can reduce the supply of illegal drugs through aggressive efforts of the kind I have described. I am pleased to report success in this respect -- the Drug Enforcement Administration has evidence that in some places cocaine prices seem to have bottomed out and are now going up again, an indication that the drug is in shorter supply.

Nonetheless, I must state emphatically that the drug problem cannot be attacked only on the supply side. It must also be attacked on the demand side. The root of the drug problem is not just the literal root -- of the coca plant, for example -- but also the human choice, particularly by our young people, to use the drug. As President Reagan said in a speech yesterday, "no matter how effective we are against the pushers and drug

smugglers, it still comes down to our young people making the right choice -- the choice that keeps them free of drugs."

Making this choice -- the right choice -- is one of the critical issues of our day. During the past two decades illegal drugs have made such inroads in our society that even persons in positions of responsibility have begun to use them. Drug use is not uncommon among physicians, lawyers, politicians, professors, teachers, members of the media, professional athletes and those in the television and movie industry. Our everyday language bears the marks of our Drug Era, as such terms as "turned on" and "on a high" are commonly used, even by those who completely reject drugs.

Acceptable and approved at some of the highest levels of our society, illegal drugs are now being glamorized in none too subtle ways. Some perfumes, colognes and other products have been named after opium, cocaine, and sinsemilla, a high-potency form of marijuana.

Obviously, powerful forces are at work in our society, encouraging demand for drugs. These forces must be strongly and intelligently countered so that at that crucial moment of choice, another American will not become a drug abuser or, worse, a drug addict.

As Attorney General, in charge of our efforts at the Department of Justice aimed at the supply side of the drug problem, I have been pleased to see the substantial efforts on the demand side made by so many in both the public and private sectors.

For example, responsible approaches to the widely publicized instances of drug abuse in professional sports are either in place or being put in place. The DEA and the FBI are now providing advice on illegal drugs and drug trafficking to many professional athletic teams. Meanwhile, First Lady Nancy Reagan has been working to help children understand the dangers of drug use. In Hollywood concerned actors, actresses and others in the industry have banded together in an effort to encourage young people against drug abuse. And across the country, more than 4,000 parent groups have dedicated themselves to educating young people about the dangers of illegal drug use.

These efforts are having an impact. Between 1975 and 1983 daily use of marijuana by high school

seniors declined from 10.7 percent to 5.5 percent. Even more significant is the attitudinal change: In 1978, only 35 percent of seniors surveyed thought marijuana harmful; last year some 63 percent thought so, and more than 80 percent disapproved of regular marijuana use.

As encouraging as these numbers are, this is no time to be complacent. The cultural forces encouraging drug demand remain strong, and only by increased efforts will we be able to counter them effectively and claim ultimate success. We are in a struggle for the future -- the future of our young people, the future of the America they will inherit.

Today, with confidence we can prevail in this struggle, I am pleased to announce one of the most significant programs ever undertaken in the field of drug abuse prevention and education. This program will seek to prevent drug abuse among school age youth. It will emphasize the importance of role models -- of the coach as a model for his athletes, of the athletes as models for others who do not participate in sports. This program will reach 48,000 coaches and 5.5 million student-athletes in 20,000 high schools, and we expect its influence to reach into the junior high and elementary schools as well.

The initiative I am announcing will be a joint effort undertaken by the Justice Department, through the Drug Enforcement Administration, in concert with the National High School Athletic Coaches Association. Other organizations joining us in this program include the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Football League and the National Football League Players Association.

In a few moments, Bud Mullen, administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, will describe this new program in greater detail. Before Bud joins you, I would like to say a few words about role models.

First, those in positions of responsibility cannot escape the fact that they influence others, particularly the young. Physicians, politicians, and professors; actors, actresses, and athletes: Such individuals influence communities and cities, some even the entire nation. They can be influences for good -- or its opposite. The Department of Justice joins other Americans in admiring those leaders and celebrities who respect their positions of influence on the issue of illegal drugs and act accordingly. At the same time we

will not hesitate to pursue whoever violates the federal narcotics laws.

Second, I would like to emphasize the role your athletes can play in influencing those around them.

One all-pro football player convicted of federal drug offenses recalls that he first used drugs when he was 14 or 15. This player notes that at that age, if someone walked up to him or one of his friends and said, "Here, smoke this," they would smoke it. Why? Because, as he says, "you wanted to be liked. You hang out with a certain group of people and that's what they did."

Obviously, peer pressure is powerful. And today the great need is to help young people stand strong, against the currents of our culture that so seductively encourage them to "smoke this."

The program you will be carrying out in your schools will help fill this need. Athletes are among the most respected individuals on our campuses. Through your guidance and example, they can positively affect many of their peers and admirers. They can be powerful role models. They can provide the leadership needed to create a peer pressure strongly against drug use. They can help cut the demand in our society for illicit drugs.

Bud Mullen is here to tell you more about the program. I would like to thank Bud and the Drug Enforcement Administration for initiating this program, and I would also like to thank the NFL, the Players Association, and the Chiefs of Police for lending their support to it. And I want to commend the National High School Coaches Association for its interest in this program, and each of you, for your participation in it.

Thank you very much.