

# Foreword

In his 2004 State of the Union speech, President George W. Bush reminded Congress and the Nation of our responsibility to help children make the right choices. “One of the worst decisions children can make,” he said, “is to gamble their lives and futures on drugs.”

The President directed our attention to recent good news: survey results showing that drug use among American teenagers has dropped 11 percent in the past two years. This achievement not only marked improvement not seen in a decade, it also met the national goal the President set in February 2002 to reduce drug use among 12- to 17-year-olds by 10 percent within two years.



**JOHN P. WALTERS**

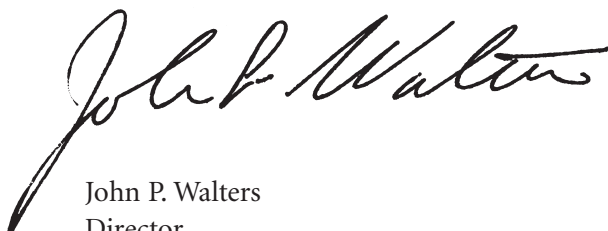
Our progress demonstrated that, when we push back against drug use, it will recede. And now that effort has been given an added boost. In his speech, the President pledged \$23 million in additional funding to support one of the most powerful tools for preventing youth substance abuse: school-based drug testing.

In June 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court broadened the authority of public schools to test students for illegal drugs, thereby making this powerful tool available to any school battling drug problems. Since that historic ruling, a number of schools across the country have seized this opportunity to implement drug-testing programs of their own.

Parents and educators have a responsibility to keep children and teens safe from drug use. We have made important progress. Our task is now to move further. We must identify and use the best tools at our disposal to protect kids from a behavior that destroys bodies and minds, impedes academic performance, and creates barriers to success and happiness. Drug testing is just such a tool—powerful, safe, and effective. It is

available to any school, public or private, that understands the devastation of drug use and is determined to confront it. Many schools urgently need effective ways to reinforce their anti-drug efforts. Drug testing can help them.

I hope that schools considering adding a testing program to their current prevention efforts will find reassurance in knowing that drug testing can be done effectively and compassionately. Testing, after all, cannot be used to punish kids who use drugs. Its purpose is to prevent use in the first place, and to make sure users get the help they need to stop placing themselves and their friends at risk. Random drug testing is not a substitute for all our other efforts to reduce drug use by young people, but it does make all those efforts much stronger and more effective.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John P. Walters". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

John P. Walters  
Director  
Office of National Drug Control Policy  
October 2004