

REMARKS

OF

**MARY LOU LEARY
ACTING ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS**

AT THE

NIJ CONFERENCE

ON

**MONDAY, JUNE 18, 2012
WASHINGTON, DC**

Thank you, John. I'm delighted to be here, and thrilled to see such a great turnout.

I'm so pleased to help open this conference, and I'm honored to be joined by the Acting Associate Attorney General, Tony West. I look forward to introducing him in a few minutes.

I want to begin by thanking John and his amazing staff for their hard work in putting together this program. The agenda is jam-packed with informative and interesting presentations. It won't be easy to choose which sessions to attend.

For those of you who've never been to an NIJ Conference, you're in for a treat. This is an opportunity to hear from and share ideas with the best minds in criminal and juvenile justice. It's one of the few places where you'll have the chance to come together with leading scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to discuss the full range of important issues in our field.

And the benefits are reciprocal. Criminal justice professionals are able to talk to scientists and explain their concerns, and scientists can learn how the field is applying the findings from research. Our goal is to facilitate a vigorous and thoughtful exchange of knowledge that will lead to better policies and practices throughout the justice system.

This translation of knowledge to practice is a top priority of mine, and it informs all the work we do at OJP – certainly through NIJ's critical work, but also throughout the agency, whether through the Smart Policing and Smart Probation programs in our Bureau of Justice Assistance, the work our Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is doing to apply science to juvenile justice policies, the efforts in our Office for Victims of Crime to use data to drive victim services, or the important contributions our Bureau of Justice Statistics makes to expanding our base of knowledge. We're working to make evidence central to the way we do business.

Through our Evidence Integration Initiative – led by Dr. Phelan Wyrick and his outstanding team – we're working hard to make sure this evidence is getting out to the field in an accessible and useable format. A centerpiece of this effort is our clearinghouse of evidence-based practices, CrimeSolutions.gov. Those of you who were here will remember that we launched this Web resource at the NIJ Conference last year. When we went live, the site catalogued some 125 programs. A year later, I'm happy to report that we now have more than 200 evidence-based programs in our repository.

The beauty of CrimeSolutions.gov is that it was created with the front-line practitioner and policymaker in mind. The information it includes is easily digestible and practical, and every program includes a rating for effectiveness based on the strength of the science behind it. Our goal is to give professionals the information they need to decide which approaches are best for their specific challenges.

I'm pleased that we've recently begun testing of a new resource to complement CrimeSolutions.gov. We call it the OJP Diagnostic Center, and it's a one-stop consultation service designed to help states, localities, and tribes identify and adapt evidence-based approaches. The idea is to help jurisdictions use local crime data to develop long-term strategies for addressing deep-seated challenges. We're piloting the Center with several jurisdictions now, and we hope to open it for general business in the fall.

The Diagnostic Center and CrimeSolutions.gov nicely complement and support NIJ's mission of making knowledge work in the criminal and juvenile justice fields. We're fortunate to have a leader in John Laub who cares deeply about the role science can play in informing practice and whose staff is working day in and day out to help justice system professionals use knowledge to do their jobs better. And we're lucky to have leaders in the Department like Tony West and Attorney General Holder who value science and have given their full support to our efforts.

As we all know, the challenges facing us in criminal justice are considerable. But our knowledge about what works is growing, and the tools and technology we have at our disposal are expanding. We are becoming – every day – more sophisticated, more informed, and more effective. Each of you has played a role in building an evidence-based system of justice. I hope you will continue to work with us to help move us forward even farther.

It's now my privilege to introduce our next speaker.

Tony West has been a great friend of the Office of Justice Programs and the National Institute of Justice – and, like the Attorney General, a champion of science. He's served as Acting Associate Attorney General since March, but he's a veteran of the Department of Justice. Before he took on his new role, he was the Assistant Attorney General of the Department's Civil Division. Back in the 90s, we knew each other in our work together as part of the Department under Janet Reno. And we share experience as federal prosecutors.

He had been Acting Associate Attorney General for just three days when he came to OJP and personally pledged his support for our work, including our efforts to promote science and research. He's remained a wonderful partner and champion.

I'm thrilled he could join us today. Please join me in welcoming Acting Associate Attorney General Tony West.

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