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WELCOMING REMARKS

BY

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BEFORE

THE MULTI-SITE CONFERENCE ON SHOCK INCARCERATION

9:00 A.M.

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Good morning and welcome to the multi-site conference on shock incarceration.

The President, Attorney General Thornburgh, Director Bennett, and Congress have concurred: We must change our methods of handling drug offenders. All of those involved with illegal drugs -- whether the casual user, the addict, the pusher or the dealer -- must be held accountable for their actions. Currently our prison systems are filled to capacity. We are building new prisons but the sheer enormity of the number of users may make routine incarceration problematic. Thus, we search for new options that are cost-effective, protect the public, and change the behavior of the offender.

In the last few years, the National Institute of Justice has done some intensive research into a wide range of intermediate sanctions that expand the options judges have and which might help to provide the most appropriate and effective correctional environment for many violators. Shock incarceration is a short term punishment tactic that has received quite a bit of public attention.

The major incentive for developing shock incarceration programs and some of the other approaches is the need for cost-effective methods of coping with crowding in prisons and ensuring the President's pledge, if you use drugs you will be caught and punished. The shorter period of time these offenders spend in prison saves money -- if they are effectively deterred from continuing their criminal careers when they get out. Many

people -- including Legislators and local officials -- also feel that the enhanced discipline of a shock incarceration program fills a common need of offenders and will, therefore, have improved rehabilitative effects. Rather than spending a long, expensive period of time in a regular prison where idleness and bad habits continue, offenders spend a short period of time in prison in an atmosphere that is conducive to change. The unpleasantness and difficulty of these programs also seem to fulfil the public's need to see offenders punished. There is a moral clarity with this punishment.

These are only a few of the benefits people expect from shock incarceration programs. We do not yet know whether these programs will be effective in producing these hoped-for results. While shock incarceration sounds like a unified concept it is really a diverse group of programs. These programs in different states vary greatly in operations and in goals. Some emphasize hard work; in others offenders spend their time in educational programs; some programs release offenders to regular community supervision; while other programs include a period of intensive supervision in the community. Researchers may be able to tell us which of these programs have beneficial results so that more effective models for these programs can be developed.

Another exciting direction for the programs and your research is the possibility of developing shock incarceration programs for use with drug offenders. The National Institute of Justice's DUF program has revealed the phenomenal amount of

illegal drugs used by arrested offenders. In the National Drug Control Strategy, shock incarceration has been proposed as a method of handling the expected large numbers of drug offenders.

Texas and New York have developed shock incarceration programs specifically for drug offenders. Representatives from these states will be describing their programs this morning. Information about these programs will be crucial in helping policy makers make informed decisions regarding drug offenders.

Again, welcome to Washington, D.C. and this meeting. Shock incarceration has received a great deal of attention; there have been hearings and discussions in the House and Senate; the National Drug Control Strategy proposes "boot camp" prisons for drug offenders; there have been numerous newspaper articles and television shows covering the topic. The need for empirical information is indisputable. Your work at this meeting will have a direct impact on future decisions. The need for and the importance of research in such endeavors is obvious. We appreciate your work and look forward to the research discoveries you make.