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MRS. REAGAN'S REMARKS
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON MARIJUANA CONFERENCE
December 4, 1981

Right at the start, let me thank the American Council on Marijuana for its work in publicizing the harmful effects of illicit drug use. I believe ACM is in the same business as the American Cancer Society and the National Safety Council--that of saving lives.

During the campaign last year, I visited Daytop Village, a drug treatment center in New York, and I was genuinely stunned by the magnitude of America's drug problem. There's no question that youthful abuse is now the overwhelming drug abuse problem. They are smoking, shooting, or sniffing while parents stand by feeling confused and heartsick. We've come to realize there simply aren't any soft drugs--they're all dangerous and damaging.

Since my first visit to Daytop and other centers, I've taken an active interest in drug abuse, trying to learn its causes and consequences and trying to bring public awareness, particularly parental awareness, to the drug disaster. So many families are simply at a loss about how to handle a drug using youngster--can't change their attitudes or behavior and can't rebut the messages the youngsters are getting from the rest of society. Kids have picked up quickly on the broad sanction "social" drug use now enjoys. They get the word through music and much of today's humor, through publications for drug users and the widespread sale of drug paraphernalia. My heart goes out to these parents and to the young people--many of whom are crying out for help and guidance.

Those of you attending this conference already understand the need to confront this problem. I know that if parents, educators, and private groups work together--and this conference is the fruit of such cooperation--we can make great strides against drug abuse and perhaps save a whole generation.

You know, when our children are young we inoculate them against polio and diphtheria and whooping cough--if only we could do the same for drug abuse. But by understanding the problems, I believe we can largely immunize our children to the drug epidemic. Thank you for being part of this crusade and for your tremendous help.

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**MEMORANDUM
OF CALL**

TO:

YOU WERE CALLED BY— YOU WERE VISITED BY—

OF (Organization)

PLEASE CALL → PHONE NO. _____ FTS
CODE/EXT. _____
 WILL CALL AGAIN IS WAITING TO SEE YOU
 RETURNED YOUR CALL WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE

*I think this
covers it - If you
think of any others
call - Rusty 7/36*

RECEIVED BY

DATE

TIME

63-109

☆ U.S. G.P.O. 1982-361-529/129

STANDARD FORM 63 (Rev. 8-76)
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Sup Note Book

On Speeches on Drug

Issues by

MRS Reagan

We will need to

50 copies of each

to send on

THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY'S PRESS SECRETARY

February 22, 1982

MRS. REAGAN'S REMARKS

AT THE GOVERNORS' WIVES LUNCHEON

on the occasion of the
National Governors' Association Annual Meeting

State Dining Room
February 22, 1982

After your gracious hospitality of last year, I am happy you could join us here at the White House this year -- so a warm welcome to you all. But in the Washington tradition of there being no such thing as a free lunch, and having a captive audience, I have an ulterior motive inviting you today. I'd like to tell you what I've been doing, and if possible, pique your interest.

Since I met with you last, I've been learning a great deal about a plague that is riddling the minds and bodies of our children.

The things I have seen and heard are enough to make the strongest hearts break. The personal tragedies I've become aware of are too sad and too numerous to mention. There is a secret war in this country -- a war on our young people. The enemy is drugs and it is taking captive millions of our children, and even killing them.

Drugs rip apart not only individual lives but families as a whole. They certainly contribute to the rising crime rate. At a rehabilitation center in New York, a mother told me how the discovery that her child had been stealing money from her purse was tearing the family apart and shattering the trust and love that are essential for a family to exist. Just last week I saw confused and heartsick families trying to reweave the fabric of their lives that drugs had destroyed.

On that two-state trip I learned what can be done to combat drugs. Our first stop was Florida's Pinellas Park Elementary School to visit ALPHA, an experimental drug prevention program. ALPHA is geared toward children from third to fifth grade who, without help, might drift into drugs as a means of escaping life's problems.

That evening we attended a drug treatment facility called Straight, where for three hours teenagers and their parents spoke of their experiences in the fight against drug abuse. The emotion of that night was nothing less than riveting. Kids told how they lied and cheated and stole for drugs, and parents told of the pain in realizing their children were on drugs. You could not attend one of those sessions without learning that drugs kill love -- the love of an individual for himself, as well as for others.

In Dallas the next day, we met with Governor and Mrs. Clements and the Texans' War on Drugs Committee. The committee has worked with PTA's, Junior Leagues, Lions and Exchange Clubs and others to organize parents groups in every school. It aims not only to educate parents, but to mobilize them, and Texas recently enacted a five-law package to crack down on dealers. I also met with members of the Families in Action of Richardson, Texas, which is a parents group dedicated to removing drugs from the community. Texas is a model for what can be accomplished on the state level.

Governor Clements suggested that I enlist the help of the other governors in the drug battle. I have a better idea. I have decided to seek the help of those with the real influence -- the governors' wives. And you can do so much. By taking an active interest in your state's drug problem, you will draw increased attention to it. You can turn the spotlight on drug abuse and what concerned citizens are doing in your state to answer the problem. You can encourage the formation of parents groups. I know Rita Clements would be anxious to tell you more about what is being done in Texas.

As we sit here today, countless young people are fighting with their every ounce to free themselves of drugs. Countless others are losing the battle. Our role as women, as mothers, must extend beyond worrying about our children and trying to nurse them back to health. It seems to me, we must organize to defend our young people against drugs. I am happy to announce that on March 22, I will be hosting the first White House briefing on drug use and the family to highlight this problem. I'll be writing to you with a report on that briefing. I hope that what I've said will make you want to help us fight drug abuse, and that the information will help you at home. I hope you will help us fight for our children and for the next generation.

Thank you.

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