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**Collection:** Speechwriting, White House Office  
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**Folder Title:** Nancy Reagan: Remarks for the  
Drug Free Schools Recognition Ceremony

May 16, 1988

**Box:** 438

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REMARKS FOR THE DRUG FREE SCHOOLS RECOGNITION CEREMONY  
MONDAY, MAY 16, 1988

-- THANK YOU. FIRST, LET ME CONGRATULATE ALL THE HONORED PRINCIPALS, COMMUNITY LEADERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS WHO ARE HERE WITH US TODAY. YOU'VE ALL REALIZED SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT AND IT'S THIS: SOMEWHERE WE MUST BEGIN TO SAY NO TO DRUGS, AND THAT PLACE IS IN THE SCHOOLS AMONG OUR YOUNG PEOPLE. AND THAT IS WHY YOU ARE HAVING SUCH AN IMPACT.

-- YOU MAY NOT REALIZE IT BUT YOU'RE THE FULFILLMENT OF MANY OF MY HOPES. YOU'VE DONE EXACTLY WHAT I'VE BEEN URGING

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SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES TO DO FOR THE LAST SEVEN YEARS -- AND THAT IS TO BECOME AWARE AND THEN BECOME INVOLVED.

-- I WANT TO MENTION THE WORK OF THE PRINCIPALS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, BECAUSE I KNOW THAT IT IS OFTEN DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO TAKE A FIRM, STRICT STAND AGAINST DRUGS. STRANGELY ENOUGH, THERE ARE FREQUENTLY PRESSURES WORKING AGAINST FIRMNESS, AND THE PRINCIPALS NEED THE SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY LEADERS AND PARENTS TO BACK THEM IN THEIR STAND. WE HAVE SUCH DEDICATED AND FIRM PRINCIPALS AND

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS WITH US TODAY.

-- AND TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE HERE, WELL, I KNOW IN MY HEART THAT IT IS YOU WHO WILL EVENTUALLY SOLVE THE DRUG CRISIS IN THIS COUNTRY. WE COULD HAVE PARENTS AND TEACHERS FOLLOWING CHILDREN'S EVERY MOVE. WE COULD HAVE DRUG AGENTS ON EVERY CORNER, TREATMENT CENTERS ON EVERY BLOCK, JAILS IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD, AND STILL THERE WOULD BE THE DEMAND FOR DRUGS. WHAT WILL WIN THE BATTLE AGAINST DRUGS IS A CHANGE IN ATTITUDES.

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-- AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ACCOMPLISHING. YOU HAVE MORE POWER TO STOP DRUGS THAN OUR DRUG AGENTS AND OUR POLICE AND OUR MILITARY COMBINED. AND THAT IS WHY I ALWAYS FEEL SO HOPEFUL WHEN I SEE YOU ACTIVELY WORKING AGAINST THE DRUG EPIDEMIC.

-- IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THE DRUG PROBLEM IS MORE CRITICAL THAN EVER, THERE IS A SMALL TREND AWAY FROM DRUGS, NOT TOWARD THEM. CERTAINLY FOR THOSE WHO USE DRUGS, THE CRISIS IS WORSE THAN EVER. AND WE DESPERATELY NEED NEW WAYS TO REACH THE YOUNG IN THE INNER

CITY, WHERE DRUG PRESSURES ARE ENORMOUS. BUT, NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE WHO'VE NEVER BEEN INVOLVED WITH DRUGS.

-- AND YOU HERE TODAY DESERVE CREDIT. YOU ARE AMONG THOSE WHO ARE MAKING THE DIFFERENCE. YOU ARE CHANGING THE WAY THIS NATION THINKS ABOUT DRUGS. AND YOU HAVE MY CONGRATULATIONS AND MY GRATITUDE AND MY ADMIRATION.

-- THANK YOU FOR COMING AND THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU'RE DOING AT HOME.

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