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Jiles Ship

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MR. SHIP: First of all, I'd like to thank the Eisenhower Foundation for convening this important gathering. Secondly, I'd like to compliment Charlene. I don't know if she left the room or not, but she's doing a phenomenal job.

I just want to start out by identifying myself. You saw some of my professional resume in here and that's not important with respect to the discussion today. I also, like the gentlemen who spoke earlier -- and, Charlie, just for the record, you are not a youth.

We both graduated high school the same time and we both started college together, coming in on an EOF program.

We both also grew up in public housing projects. We both also were on public assistance. We both also were the youngest of seven children raised by an African American woman, all right, who did a phenomenal job.

We came into college at the same time to an institution that neither one of us had ever had any experience with it. It was Ryder College. Challenging for us. We came in there. Other students in the accounting course, they had already knew what a bank reconciliation was. They had their parents' checking account. We never had a checking account. We didn't know what a checkbook looked like.

So, therefore, we were behind and that was the purpose of the EOF program to give us a foot up, and subsequently we took advantage of that.

But getting more so specific about the subject matter we're here for today, crime and criminal justice, we can spend a whole week talking about that. We know a lot of the ills that are in the system. We know all the (indiscernible) economic conditions that precipitate a lot of the crime that occurs in urban communities.

NOBLE, which is actually the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, was borne out of a symposium that was had by the Law Enforcement Assistants Administration, the Police Foundation, and The Joint Center for Political Studies back in 1976 in Washington, D.C. to deal with the same problems 31 years ago that we're dealing with today, the riots and urban violence. All right?

And it's really tough for me to get up here and talk about that. I've been a professional law enforcement officer for 23 years. 23 years prior to that I was living in an under-served community. So I bring and we bring with NOBLE a different perspective to the table, when we're invited to the table. A lot of times the policy decisions are made

before we can even give input, and those same policies have a direct impact on communities of people who look like us.

I was talking to Charlene earlier. I said, Charlene, this crime thing is big. What section do you want me to talk about? She said, well, what would you like to -- I said, let's deal with the juveniles, and if those four young brothers are in here still, I want to applaud you. Keep up the good work. You should be proud.

(Applause.)

MR. SHIP: And I'm tired of hearing the excuse that we don't have money. We don't have resources.

We just built up \$9 trillion worth of debt in this country. Okay? So we have resources and money somewhere when we really want to deal with the problems that we want to prioritize as a nation.

The juvenile justice system in this State of New Jersey is one of the worst justice systems, juvenile justice systems in the nation. All right? There are better best practices out there.

What I mean by that we are working under a punitive system. The juvenile justice system is not supposed to be a punitive system. Okay? It's supposed to take our young people into that system, train them, educate them, and make them a better people when they come out of there.

Of course some people have to be dealt with in a different environment. I'm a realist. I'm not going to sit up here and play games, but there are other models.

In Minnesota, for example, there are people going into their juvenile justice system and they're coming out productive young people. So why can't we employ that here in New Jersey.

If you go down to the Jamesburg Training School for Boys, so it's called, it looks like a medium security adult prison in the State of New Jersey. There's barb wire up. There's a lot of -- it looks like a prison facility, and I started out my career working in Rahway State Prison. So I know what a prison looks like. And a lot of my friends, I always say they're before the grace of God, but why, because I grew up in the same conditions. I just ran a little faster than the other cats in my community.

But we have to really get on top of our politicals and if they're not going to do it, we need to start another party or something, but it starts down here on the grassroots level, and that's the only way we're going to be successful is by organizing and putting the pressure where the pressure needs to be.

We with NOBLE -- I'm just going to go back to one other thing just for a second.

You know, we talked about the \$9 trillion worth of debt that was ran up by the federal government. In this state anytime there's a cry for improvement in infrastructure, okay, we come up with the money. All right? But when there's a cry for improvements in the urban centers, we don't have any money. Something's wrong with that picture. All right?

Lastly, what we're doing at NOBLE, we consider ourselves to be the conscience of law enforcement and we believe in justice by action.

So what we're going to do, and we want to invite all of you out. My e-mail address is attached with the program. Get in touch with us. We'll be glad to invite all of you out.

We're having a youth violence and victimization town hall meeting right here in Newark. We were fortunate enough to get a \$300,000 grant from Wal-Mart and we're going to hit four cities on the east coast. First we're going to Richmond, Virginia. We're going to Baltimore, Maryland, Philadelphia and then we're coming here to Newark.

And we want input from the community. We want input from clergy. We want input from everyone and we are going to develop a white paper in partnership with the Department of Justice, and Howard University is going to handle the academia portion of the discussion. We're going to catalog what everybody say, and we want to make this comprehensive. We just don't want to come one day and have a town hall meeting and then go on our way.

We are going to deal with this problem because if we don't deal with it ourselves, we're going to -- if we wait and rely on government, it will never happen. So we're going to take it on ourselves and we're going to deal with this and we would appreciate your support in that effort.

Thank you.