

Speech by ROBERT MORGAN
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This morning I feel somewhat like the manager of a business coming before a board of directors to make an annual report. Many of the goals I have set for myself as Attorney General have been with the idea of improving the criminal justice system and of supplementing the police and sheriffs' departments. In this sense then, the Police Executives Association and the Sheriffs Association are a board of directors whose members have offered guidance, suggestions, and support. Together we have made progress and together it will continue.

Your program for this annual conference, I feel, is an indication that you are looking to the future in law enforcement. Your speakers apparently have been selected with the future in mind. Your President, Colonel Wooters, is obviously interested in what the months and years ahead hold for law enforcement. But, more important, Colonel Wooters wants this

association to have an active part in shaping that future. And, indeed you should have, for who knows better than you the problems and potentials of law enforcement.

In these last three and one-half years -- since I became attorney general -- we have seen considerable progress in the field of law enforcement. Many of your departments have grown and developed. More officers have obtained more training. Departments are better equipped and better prepared today than ever before for any type of emergency. City and county governments, as well as the State and federal government, are more conscious of the needs of law enforcement, and are attempting to meet those needs.

One of the most encouraging actions taken in the field of law enforcement was the creation of the North Carolina Training and Standards Council. The Police Executives Association for years advocated such and this council was active in obtaining legislative

approval for it in 1971. The Council, which is chaired by Sheriff Malcolm McLeod of Robeson County, has selected Lt. John Faircloth of Greensboro, as its director. I am sure Colonel Wooters will vouch for the wisdom of that choice. The Department of Justice will provide the housekeeping functions for the Council, and I assure you we will do all possible to assist in its work.

Within the Department of Justice, I have concentrated a good deal of my time and effort in developing and providing resources to assist police departments and sheriffs departments in their operations. The Police Information Network is an accomplishment of which I am particularly proud. Dr. Howard Livingston, the director of PIN, is on your program this afternoon and will tell you of what is being done now and what we are planning. Already more than 100 terminals are in operation, providing a new resource for law enforcement. More are planned. The potential of PIN is virtually unlimited.

The State Bureau of Investigation has greatly expanded its services to law enforcement. One of the first things I did after becoming attorney general was to talk with many of you and develop a program of more effective assistance in criminal investigations.

In following that plan, the SBI has not only increased in size, but more importantly, its training has expanded. The Bureau is now able to respond more readily and more effectively to your requests with qualified investigators, mobile labs, and full laboratory services.

I feel confident that the State services to municipal and county law enforcement agencies will continue to improve in the years ahead.

And, I assure you that the attorney general's office will do everything possible to encourage greater awareness and support of law enforcement on the part of county and municipal governing bodies. Even so there must be a continuing effort to effectively and efficiently utilize all resources, including those coming from the federal government through

the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

Under the LEAA program, the federal government is making substantial resources available to the states to combat crime. George Murphy, the LEAA regional administrator from Atlanta, will be here tonight and I am sure he will tell you of the progress being made with these funds. Certainly, in North Carolina, they have provided us with new opportunities, and we have taken advantage of them. The Law and Order Committee, its staff, the regional planners, and regional planning groups are to be commended for the manner in which the program has functioned in North Carolina.

But, frankly, I believe we are at a crossroads today in the administration of the LEAA program in North Carolina. In general I support the reorganization and consolidation of state government agencies. However, I do feel that it is imperative that in the reorganization the functions of one agency not become secondary to those of another. I believe it is imperative that there be a community

of interest in the realignment of agencies. Unfortunately, I do not feel that this has occurred in placing the Law and Order Committee and its staff within the Department of Natural and Economic Resources.

The Law and Order Committee in North Carolina is now in its seventh year of operation. It began in 1965 when representatives of State and local law enforcement were brought together to seek ways to continue to make North Carolina a safer and more secure State for all citizens. It was first made a statutory body by the 1967 General Assembly. The early efforts of the committee were beneficial in seeking greater coordination among law enforcement agencies and greater resources for their operations.

The early efforts of this Committee were beneficial in giving North Carolina a head start in implementing the program spelled out in the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968.

North Carolina already had a coordinating and planning agency at work. It was the Governor's Law and Order Committee, made up of local and state law enforcement officers and others in the criminal justice system. It was a direct staff function of the Governor's office. After the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act was enacted, the State staff was expanded and it went ahead with the implementation of the federal act.

The 1969 General Assembly created the Department of Local Affairs and the State administration of the LEAA program was moved there in the Division of Law and Order. The membership of the Law and Order Committee was broadened and became more representative of the complete Criminal Justice System. The staff, too, was increased. Then came the 1971 General Assembly and the reorganization of State government. It appeared that no one knew exactly what to do with the Division of Law and Order. It was

finally placed in the vast Department of Natural and Economic Resources under the Division of Community Resources.

Through the years, even though its responsibilities were growing by leaps and bounds, the Law and Order Committee and its staff seemed to be moving further and further down in the bureaucracy of government. There has obviously been a restlessness among the professional staff. I don't have the figures, but from observation I expect there has been as high a rate of turnover in the Law and Order staff as in any other agency of government. That it has functioned as well as it has is a credit to the people who have served.

I have nothing but compliments for the administrators of the Law and Order staff through the years: Charles Clement, Jim Van Camp, Major Bill Julian, and now Chuck Barham. They all have been dedicated men, with leadership capabilities, and they have done

good jobs. But, the turnover rate has been extremely high --just about one per year since I have been attorney general. There has been a similar uncertainty with the professional staff and they have come and gone almost as regular as State plans. This turnover has added to the problems of State and local agencies participating in the program.

As I am sure George Murphy will tell you tonight, the LEAA program can be expected to grow in the years ahead. The program has helped us to make gains throughout the criminal justice system, but much remains to be done. And, the pace of progress must quicken. The burden for wise planning and careful utilization of resources will fall on all of us but on none more heavily than the Law and Order Committee staff. That staff must have leadership experienced in the criminal justice system. It must have continuity of direction and strong support not diluted by various and sundry other interests.

Based on its experience to date, I do not believe we can have as effective a law and order program as we need if the Law and Order staff is left within the Department of Natural and Economic Resources. This is in no way a criticism of the leadership of that Department. It is composed of good, dedicated people who are making tremendous contributions to North Carolina in development, in conservation, and in many other areas. But they are not experienced in the criminal justice fields. Unfortunately, the law and order functions within that department are completely overshadowed by these other areas.

The Law and Order staff should be administratively within the Department of Justice, and I will seek to have legislation introduced in the 1973 General Assembly to accomplish this. Personally, I had rather not assume the additional responsibility. But, as a practical matter and in order that North Carolina attain

as many benefits as possible from the LEAA program, this transfer is necessary. Within the Department of Justice, the Law and Order program would find a community of interest, it would find support, and it would receive the attention it must have to function at maximum effectiveness.

This transfer would in no way conflict with the federal act setting up the program. Several other states already have placed the state planning agency under the jurisdiction of the Attorney General. This makeup and the responsibilities of the Law and Order Committee would in no way be altered. By putting the Law and Order staff within the Department of Justice, there would be more continuity and direction for the LEAA program in North Carolina. The end result would be a better and more coordinated program for law enforcement and the entire criminal justice system.

Let me end this morning by reiterating the opportunity that

we in law enforcement have. The impetus for development that we have in North Carolina, plus the resources of LEAA, gives us the best hope that the Criminal Justice System in North Carolina has ever had. The opportunity we have may never be offered again. While I am pleased with the progress of the last few years, I feel the future is all important. We have the opportunity of developing the type of criminal justice system the people of North Carolina need and deserve. With planning, cooperation and action, together we can make the most of this opportunity.
