

Remarks by President Trump in Roundtable with County Sheriffs

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THE PRESIDENT: Oh, the sheriffs are great people. Well, thank you very much. Law enforcement was a big subject in the campaign and a subject that was very well received. You have no idea how respected you are, sheriffs and, generally speaking, the leaders of law enforcement. Anybody involved in law enforcement, you have no idea how respected you are — you don't get the honest facts from the press — if you don't know how respected you are. So I just want to say that upfront.

I'm honored to welcome the National Sheriffs' Association. Your leadership is here, and I know the great job you do. I've known you and followed you for a long period of time. Your efforts and your officers are outstanding. I know so many sheriffs from my area — some in particular — and they're great friends and great people.

I just want to let you know that our job is to help you in law enforcement, and we're going to help you do your job. We're going to expand access to abuse-detering drugs, which a lot of you have been talking about. They're out, and they're very hard to get. Stop the opioid epidemic. We've got to do it. It's a new thing. And, honestly, people aren't talking about it enough. It's a new thing, and it's a new problem for you folks. It's probably a vast majority of your crimes — or at least a very big portion of your crimes are caused by drugs.

We're going to stop the border. We're going to stop — we're not going to have the drugs pouring from the border like they have been. We will work with you on supporting your longstanding efforts to strengthen the bonds between the communities and the police, which is very important. And it's sort a new phenomenon to a certain extent, and it's happening more and more. And some great results out when you can strengthen the bonds.

We're committed to securing our borders to reduce crime, illegal drugs, human trafficking, especially in border counties. We have a lot of the border counties represented.

We're also committed to working with law enforcement to stop terrorist attacks. You've been

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reading about that, been seeing about that — they want to take a lot of our powers away. There are some people with a lot of the wrong intentions, and it's — we've got a lot of bad people out there.

And, Dana, I just want to thank you on behalf of the government, on behalf of our country for leading a strong, strong effort in the courts. We really appreciate it, believe me. Because as you know, we don't have an attorney general. We have somebody who's phenomenal — Jeff Sessions. He's going to be there hopefully soon. But I believe it's about a record for the length of time that they've delayed the Cabinet. These are Cabinet members that are phenomenal people. And we haven't had representation, and now we have excellent representation, fortunately, in Dana. And Jeff will be with you very shortly, hopefully. But we're having a hard time getting approvals. And it's only a delay tactic — it's all politics.

One person came up to me, a senator, a Democratic senator who came up to me the other day and said, Jeff Sessions is a fantastic man. He's fabulous. He's a friend of mine. He's a great, great man and a great talent. And we're lucky to have him. I said, oh, great, I guess that means you're voting for him? No, I won't be voting that. (Laughter.) He said, politics doesn't allow me to do that.

I thought it was a disgrace. If the press talks loud and hard enough, I'll have to tell you who said that to me. You don't want to hear it. You don't want to hear who said that? (Laughter.) I didn't think you'd care. I didn't think you'd care. I'll probably tell you, actually. Anyway.

So we're going to be very tough on crime. So we're going to be very tough on the drugs pouring in, and that's a big part of the crime. We're going to be very strong at the border. We have no choice. And we're going to be building a wall. We're starting very soon. General Kelly will be working with a lot of you. And he's fantastic. He was the one who got approved very quickly along with General Mattis. He's very, very outstanding. And I very much appreciate that you're here today.

And, Sheriff, I really thank you for leading the effort. Your reputation is fantastic, and it's a great honor to know you. Maybe we can go around — we'll let the press stay for a little while, unless you'd rather leave. Would the press rather stay? Just so you understand. This is a new phenomenon. You're on live television all over the world right now, so don't get nervous when you speak, okay? (Laughter.)

But I don't think these things have ever taken place before. But you are on live television, so if you don't want to say anything, you don't have to. But if you do, I think it's a good thing to say. So maybe we'll just go around the room.

SHERIFF WELSH: Well, Mr. President, thank you so much for having us here. I'm Sheriff Carolyn Welsh from Chester County, Pennsylvania, and proud to say Pennsylvania, the commonwealth, that put you over the top November 8th.

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THE PRESIDENT: It's true. (Laughter.)

SHERIFF WELSH: We're very proud of that. We don't stop bragging about that.

THE PRESIDENT: You were a great support.

SHERIFF WELSH: Thank you. And I just want to thank you for, during the campaign and since the campaign, being such a strong, courageous supporter of law enforcement on the national — on the federal level with the Border Patrol, on the state level, and the counties, municipalities, boroughs, and particularly with the elected sheriffs of the counties — because we are the sheriff, we are the people's representative, and we are elected by the people, and we greatly appreciate your strong and continued support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Carolyn. There's a new sheriff in town.

SHERIFF WELSH: That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: I hear this so much. (Laughter.) I hear this so much, Dana. They always use, "there's a new sheriff in town." So anyway.

SHERIFF EAVANSON: Sheriff Harold Eavanson from Rockwall County, Texas. We appreciate your support very much. Our county is probably about 85 percent Republican. So it was pretty easy for you —

THE PRESIDENT: They were very nice. I agree. They were very nice.

SHERIFF EAVANSON: And being in a border state, I have been to the border in Texas any number of times, been to the border in Arizona. I clearly understand the problem we have. And previously when we'd go to the border and hear what the ranchers and sheriffs have to say — those border sheriffs and border ranchers, it was a 180 degrees from what we heard from the previous administration.

THE PRESIDENT: So you're seeing a big difference?

SHERIFF EAVANSON: We're very proud to have you as President.

THE PRESIDENT: And that's only two weeks. Okay? It's a very short period of time. I'm hearing it from a lot of people. People are calling in and they're — and people I know that are in the area, they're saying it's like day and night. Because we're not playing games. We're not playing games. We're stopping the drugs from pouring into our country and poisoning our youth. So thank you very much. I appreciate it.

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SHERIFF EAVANSON: You're welcome.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. President, I'm Jonathan Thompson, the executive director and CEO of the National Sheriffs' Association. Let me tell you the difference of six months. I sat in this room, in this chair, and I was pleading — I was begging for help. Today, you've invited us here to your home. You're offering help. You're delivering on that offer. And on behalf of our members across the country, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. It's so nice. I appreciate that.

SHERIFF STANEK: Mr. President, Rich Stanek from Hennepin County, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

First off, thank you very much. As Ms. Conway said, next time, up by three points in my state — over the top.

THE PRESIDENT: Boy, we almost won your state. You know we weren't supposed to do very well in your state, and we won — lost by one point. I say, if I went there one more visit we would have won. (Laughter.) We would have won Minnesota. But it was very close.

SHERIFF STANEK: Many of us have your back, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, I know.

SHERIFF STANEK: And I just want to say that you hit on two topics that are near and dear to my heart. The first is opioids — 144 people that died last year as a result of opioid overdose; 31 percent increase over the year before. We need help. Eighty-plus percent of the drugs come from south of the border. Everybody knows it. I know you will do something about it.

THE PRESIDENT: I will. It's already being done, believe me. It's a big, big difference. And we will do that, and you do have a big problem, and you have a big problem with the refugees pouring in, don't you?

SHERIFF STANEK: Yes, we do, sir. And we all asking if what you're doing, which is let the courts decide, do what we've been doing. Rule of law is strong and the proper vetting of individuals is really important to us.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know, the vetting is much, much tougher now. And we need this court case. It will be very helpful to keeping the wrong people out of our country. You understand that better than anybody. So I think we're going to have some good results.

SHERIFF STANEK: I do, sir.

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THE PRESIDENT: It may take a little while. And you know, this is a very dangerous period of time because while everybody is talking and dealing, a lot of bad people are thinking about, hey, let's go in right now. But we're being very, very tough with the vetting — tougher than ever before.

SHERIFF STANEK: Sir, I chaired the Homeland Security Committee for the National Sheriffs' Association. We heard from General Kelly yesterday, his message was right on the mark about carrying out your directives, and we appreciate that.

THE PRESIDENT: That used to be a political position, you know, what General Kelly is doing here right now. Homeland Security, if you remember — it's like a political position. Not anymore. Now it's, in my opinion, one of truly most important positions. So he's doing a great job. Thank you very much.

SHERIFF STANEK: Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, sir.

SHERIFF GLICK: Mr. President, thank you. It's such an honor to be here. I'm Danny Glick, sheriff of Laramie County, Wyoming. You know, there are so many issues that you'll hear going around this table. One of the ones that probably isn't — that people don't realize is EPA decisions that have affected our coal industry, our oil industry in the West. But beyond that, it increases the number of people that are jobless and thus increases our crime statistics. And it's starting to overwhelm us. We're very small out there for the most part, and we don't have the numbers of deputies, officers and law enforcement that can sometimes keep up with this. I appreciate what you've done and what you're planning in the future. I think it was very well publicized, and I just appreciate being here today.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sheriff. And I will tell you that the EPA — you're right. I call it — it's clogged the bloodstream of our country. People can't do anything. People are looking to get approvals for factories for 15 years, and then after the 15th year they get voted down after having spent a fortune. So that's going to end. We have one of our really great people — as you know, Scott is looking to be approved by the Senate. We're still waiting for that one, too. It's a disgrace what's going on. But as soon as he gets involved, we're going to unclog the system.

And, by the way, people are going to get rejected, but they're going to get rejected quickly. But for the most part, they're going to be accepted when they want to do. We're going to bring the jobs back. And your state was very, very good to me, as you know. I mean, they were very, very good to me and I appreciate that. And just tell the people we're going to get the system unclogged and we're going to get it up.

As you know, I approved two pipelines that were stuck in limbo forever. I don't even think it was controversial. You know, I approved them — I haven't even heard — I haven't had one call from

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anybody saying, oh, that was a terrible thing you did. I haven't had one call. You know, usually, if I do something it's like bedlam, right? I haven't had one call from anybody. And a lot of jobs — in the Keystone case, we have potentially 32,000 jobs almost immediately. And then, as you know, I did the Dakota pipeline and nobody called up to complain. Because it was unfair. Years of getting approvals, nobody showed up to fight it. This company spends a tremendous — hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars, and then all of a sudden, people show up to fight it. It's not fair to our companies. And I think everyone is going to be happy in the end, okay?

So I appreciate it very much, Sheriff. It's a great honor to have you here. Thank you. And say hello to your people.

Yes, sir.

SHERIFF LAYTON: Good morning, Mr. President. I'm John Layton. I'm the sheriff of Marion County, Indiana, which is — (laughter) —

THE PRESIDENT: You never met our great Vice President. (Laughter.)

SHERIFF LAYTON: I'm very proud of this man. And we as sheriffs — this is, to me, it seems like it's unprecedented. I look back into the history of the NSA, long before myself, and I never have — I could never find where — not only did the President and now the Vice President, as well, has invited us into your house to share some concerns of ours —

THE PRESIDENT: And in about 10 minutes, you're going to see the Oval Office, too, which is — that's the other thing, you know, people have had meetings here. I had the car companies, the biggest companies — Ford, General Motors, Fiat — and they were in this room often. And I said, oh, so you've seen the Oval Office? "No, we've never been invited to see the Oval Office." You know where the Oval Office is? Ten feet in that direction — 10 feet.

SHERIFF LAYTON: Looking forward to it. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Look, these are the biggest people that were going there — these are the biggest people. So they were never invited to the Oval Office and they were only 10 feet away. You would think they would be invited. But you're going to see the Oval Office, okay?

SHERIFF LAYTON: Thank you, Mr. President. One of the main concerns was not just my office as sheriff, but across the nation — the mentally ill in the jails, and the people that they're being really, for lack of a better term, warehoused in our jails across America because we don't have the facilities necessary to take care of them on the outside. And it ends up a lot of these people go to jail because the public or the police officer happens to be mad at them at the time, instead of they need to be in the jail for a very good reason. So we just appreciate you having the back of law enforcement. We do all feel that, as everyone with a badge knows, that you do have our backs

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and that we're looking forward to years of harmony and taking care of business with the people we serve.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I appreciate it. And I will say that, in the recent election, law enforcement is with me. I mean, the numbers were staggering — staggering. It wasn't like, gee, it's 51-49. Believe me, it was through the roof. Law enforcement and military also.

SHERIFF LAYTON: Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: I think, generally, people in uniform tend to like me. (Laughter.) Explain that to me. Dana, explain that to me. (Laughter.) So, Sheriff, thank you very much. And do you miss your former governor?

SHERIFF LAYTON: We do, we do.

THE PRESIDENT: You have a good new governor.

SHERIFF LAYTON: Holcomb is holding down the fort for us, though, but big shoes for him to fill.

THE PRESIDENT: Mike Pence has been fantastic.

SHERIFF LAYTON: Yes, he has.

THE PRESIDENT: Dana, I want to thank you for your service. Amazing the way you just stepped into the breach and have done such a good job. And let's see what happens with the court case.

MR. BOENTE: Well, Mr. President, thank you for the privilege to serve you and the Department of Justice and the American people. I'm very honored by it. And I want to thank all the sheriffs here, but I guess our local and state partners — it's very important to federal law enforcement and all the agencies. And I know that Senator Sessions — we're looking forward to him getting to the Department — will make that an important priority. And he wants to strengthen that bond that we have with them because it's very, very important to law enforcement.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, well, thank you very much. And, you know, one of the things that you know better than anybody is that we had a very good victory in Boston. So I said to everybody, why don't we use the Boston case? Why aren't we using the Boston case? Because the Boston victory was great, but it's statutorily —

MR. BOENTE: Judge Gordon, who wrote that decision, had a very good analysis where he referred to immigration law, and I thought it was a terrific opinion. And I think it's the right opinion.

THE PRESIDENT: And a highly respected judge, too. So I appreciate it. Thank you, Dana, very

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much. Appreciate it.

SHERIFF PAGE: Mr. President, I'm Sheriff Page from Rockingham County, North Carolina. And you did very well in North Carolina. (Laughter.) And I just want to —

THE PRESIDENT: Go North Carolina.

SHERIFF PAGE: Hey! (Laughter.) And I just want to say that we appreciate you being where you're at. The first responsibility of government is protecting its people. As we as elected by the people and you're elected by the people, we got that. When you say there's a new sheriff in town, we relate to that. You're about the rule of law. We haven't seen that in many years, and we appreciate that.

And I want to tell you something — when General Kelly was speaking yesterday for the sheriffs, he made — he was telling us about — he went — I saw something that I haven't seen before. He went to the border, he looked at the assets, and he asked the law enforcement down there, what's going on and what can we do to help fix the situation down here.

So you've got a good team. You're putting together a good team. You've got the support of sheriffs from across the country, and we appreciate what you're doing.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you. And a funny story — so when General Kelly was just sworn in, now Secretary Kelly, and I said, you want to have dinner tonight and we'll talk? "Sir, I'm heading to the border." I said, I like that better. (Laughter.) We don't need to eat. I said, I like that better. So he's right on the ball, he's going to be fantastic. Because everybody has said the same thing.

Thank you. That's very nice.

SHERIFF PAGE: Thank you, sir.

SHERIFF MAHONEY: Good morning, Mr. President. Dave Mahoney, I'm the sheriff in Dane County, which is Madison, Wisconsin. I want to thank you for inviting our nation's sheriffs into the White House. You know, as the only elected law enforcement leaders in our community, we are the most engaged in our community's issues and concerns. And I think it's important. I think there's a strong message when the President of the United States invites our nation's sheriffs in to talk about those issues that are of importance in our community.

THE PRESIDENT: Has this ever happened before with the sheriffs?

PARTICIPANT: No, sir.

PARTICIPANT: No, sir.

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THE PRESIDENT: It never happened?

PARTICIPANT: Never.

THE PRESIDENT: And yet the murder rate in our country is the highest it's been in 47 years, right? Did you know that? Forty-seven years. I used to use that — I'd say that in a speech and everybody was surprised, because the press doesn't tell it like it is. It wasn't to their advantage to say that. But the murder rate is the highest it's been in, I guess, from 45 to 47 years. And you would think that you would be invited here, and you would think that you people would be able to solve — had you — if you ran Chicago, you would solve that nightmare, I tell you. I'll bet everybody in that room, especially Carolyn, right, would raise their hand. Because to allow — I mean, literally — hundreds of shootings a month, it's worse than some of the places that we read about in the Middle East, where you have wars going on. It's so sad. Chicago has become so sad a situation.

SHERIFF MAHONEY: I'm only three hours from downtown Chicago, and as Sheriff Stanek mentioned, the issues of heroin and opiate addiction — I'm averaging 12, 15 overdoses a week in my community. And we need help from DEA, FBI, and our task forces. We need them to be adequately funded and led by leaders who want to work collectively with our nation's sheriffs.

THE PRESIDENT: How much of your crime is caused, do you think, by drugs generally?

SHERIFF MAHONEY: Eighty percent?

THE PRESIDENT: Eighty percent. So without drugs, you would have a whole different ballgame.

SHERIFF MAHONEY: I have a jail, over 1,000 beds. Eighty percent suffer from chronic drug and alcohol addiction.

THE PRESIDENT: And when did it start, big league? Or has it been going on for many years?

SHERIFF MAHONEY: Well, I think heroin and opiates have overshadowed cocaine, which of course has been, since the eighties, our number-one drug of choice. Now it's prescription painkillers and —

THE PRESIDENT: And at a much higher level?

SHERIFF MAHONEY: At a higher level.

THE PRESIDENT: Much higher.

SHERIFF MAHONEY: The overdoses are at a much higher level.

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THE PRESIDENT: Right, right.

PARTICIPANT: Mr. President, I hate to interrupt — it used to take 90 days to take a load of heroin from the border to get it into the (inaudible) mainstream. Now it's taking 14 days.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, well, we'll have it take infinity, okay? (Laughter.)

SHERIFF MAHONEY: I want to thank you too for seeking the input and guidance of our nation's sheriffs on issues like immigration. My community is looking for immigration reform, an expedited way for a good immigrant to obtain citizenship in this great country. And I appreciate the invitation today to join you, and look forward to working with you on many of these issues. Some we'll disagree on, but far more we're going to agree on.

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely, you're right. I actually can't believe that we're having to fight to protect the security — in a court system to protect the security of our nation. I can't even believe it. And a lot of people agree with us, believe me. There's a group of people out there — and I mean much more than half of our country — much, much more. You're not allowed to use the term "silent majority" anymore. You're not allowed, because they make that into a whole big deal.

But there's a group of people out there — massive, massive numbers, far bigger than what you see protesting. And if those people ever protested, you would see a real protest. But they want to see our borders secure and our country secure, and they want to see people that can love our country come in, not people that are looking to destroy our country.

So anyway, thank you, Sheriff.

SHERIFF AUBREY: Sheriff John Aubrey, fifth-term sheriff, Jefferson County, Kentucky. Past president of National Sheriffs' Association. And my fellow sheriffs have brought up a number of points, and I'd like to add two to it that I know are on your plate and the administration's plate. The 1033 program, where we were sharing Department of Defense surplus material that helps us in our war. They were used in the war, and they helped us in our war. That got severely curtailed.

And the other thing is asset forfeiture. People want to say we're taking money and without due process. That's not true. We take money from dope dealers —

THE PRESIDENT: So you're saying — okay, so you're saying the asset-taking you used to do, and it had an impact, right? And you're not allowed to do it now?

SHERIFF AUBREY: No, they have curtailed it a little bit. And I'm sure the folks are —

THE PRESIDENT: And that's for legal reasons? Or just political reasons?

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SHERIFF AUBREY: They make it political and they make it — they make up stories. All you've got to do —

THE PRESIDENT: I'd like to look into that, okay? There's no reason for that. Dana, do you think there's any reason for that? Are you aware of this?

MR. BOENTE: I am aware of that, Mr. President. And we have gotten a great deal of criticism for the asset forfeiture, which, as the sheriff said, frequently was taking narcotics proceeds and other proceeds of crime. But there has been a lot of pressure on the department to curtail some of that.

THE PRESIDENT: So what do you do? So in other words, they have a huge stash of drugs. So in the old days, you take it. Now we're criticized if we take it. So who gets it? What happens to it? Tell them to keep it?

MR. BOENTE: Well, we have what is called equitable sharing, where we usually share it with the local police departments for whatever portion that they worked on the case. And it was a very successful program, very popular with the law enforcement community.

THE PRESIDENT: And now what happens?

MR. BOENTE: Well, now we've just been given — there's been a lot of pressure not to forfeit, in some cases.

THE PRESIDENT: Who would want that pressure, other than, like, bad people, right? But who would want that pressure? You would think they'd want this stuff taken away.

SHERIFF AUBREY: You have to be careful how you speak, I guess. But a lot of pressure is coming out of — was coming out of Congress. I don't know that that will continue now or not.

THE PRESIDENT: I think less so. I think Congress is going to get beat up really badly by the voters because they've let this happen. And I think badly. I think you'll be back in shape. So, asset forfeiture, we're going to go back on, okay?

SHERIFF AUBREY: Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I mean, how simple can anything be? You all agree with that, I assume, right?

PARTICIPANT: Absolutely, yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you even understand the other side of it?

PARTICIPANT: No.

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THE PRESIDENT: It's like some things —

PARTICIPANT: No sense.

THE PRESIDENT: Sort of like the Iran deal. Nobody even understands how a thing like that could have happened. It does nothing.

PARTICIPANT: You shouldn't be allowed to profit from the illegal proceeds. So if you're going to sell narcotics and sell illegal drugs in our country, you also cannot profit from that. And so we seize those profits.

THE PRESIDENT: So do we need any legislation or any executive orders for that, would you say, Dana — to put that back in business?

MR. BOENTE: I don't think we need any executive orders. We just need kind of some encouragement to move in that direction.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Good. You're in charge. (Laughter.) I love that answer, because it's better than signing executive orders and then these people take it and they make it look so terrible — “oh, it's so terrible.” I love it. You're encouraged.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Asset forfeiture. You're encouraged. Okay. Yes, sir.

MR. BITTICK: Mr. President, we appreciate you having us here today at the White House. My name is John Cary Bittick, and I'm a sheriff in Monroe County, Georgia. And I'm a past president of the National Sheriffs Association, as well. And I currently chair our governmental affairs committee. And I just want to thank you for the administration working actually on pieces of legislation and on political ideas with us. It's refreshing, and we are thoroughly enjoying it. We are currently working with Senator Grassley on some criminal justice reform issues. And the administration has been supporting us. And asset forfeiture is a big thing.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, go for it. Just go for it. Dana will tell me if I can't or if — (laughter) —

MR. BITTICK: Yes, sir. I think they got that message.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, that's great.

MR. BITTICK: But we appreciate it, and we appreciate your ear. And we appreciate you taking the time to sit down and at least talk to us.

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THE PRESIDENT: I appreciate it too. Thank you, John.

MR. BITTICK: Thanks for your support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

SHERIFF CHAMPAGNE: Thank you, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President. Greg Champagne, I am sheriff in St. Charles Parish, Louisiana, basically a suburban community outside of New Orleans. I have the honor of representing 3,088 sheriffs around the country. And you see the leadership of our organization. These are the leadership of past presidents and the future presidents of our agency. But more importantly than that, we all represent and oversee literally a few hundred thousand deputy sheriffs who are truly the backbone of law enforcement in this country. We have a bumper sticker the NSA puts out that says, "Sheriffs and deputies: The original homeland security." And so that is a force-multiplier.

Those men and women out there are the tip of the spear, and we stand ready to help and keep this community safe, because that's what we're all elected to do. So we thank you so much for having us.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. You're a great group of people.

We're going to go into the Oval Office. Does anybody have anything to — not even a question, a statement, as to how we can bring about law enforcement in a very good, civil, lovely way, but we have to stop crime — right? Would anybody like to make a statement?

PARTICIPANT: Mr. President, on asset forfeiture, we got a state senator in Texas who was talking about introducing legislation to require conviction before we can receive their forfeiture.

THE PRESIDENT: Can you believe that?

PARTICIPANT: And I told him that the cartel would build a monument to him in Mexico if he could get that legislation.

THE PRESIDENT: Who is the state senator? Want to give his name? We'll destroy his career. (Laughter.) Okay, thank you.

PARTICIPANT: Mr. President, we have been invited to the White House before. We've sat at this table with the former administration. This is totally different. Not once did the President go around the room and ask the sheriffs what were issues that were important to us, he or she, in our parts of the country, but rather it was an outgoing message about gun control, about other things. You asked us what is important to us, whether it's mental health in the jails, opioid addiction. You hit it right off the bat. The border, immigration, vetting. We appreciate that. That has not happened

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before. We've been here before, but we've never had a President sit down and listen to what it is that we're facing representing our constituents and public safety across this country. And that's why we appreciate it. That's why we're here today.

THE PRESIDENT: You know, Bill Belichick, is a great guy, a friend of mine. And he was telling me — somebody told me that he'll oftentimes, wanting to get a player, he'll go to the other players on the team — he'll say, what do you think of this guy? You know, they all the different people. And he'll listen to them. And he's done very well, right? He's done very well. And essentially what they're — we're talking to the people that know — I'm not telling you, you're telling me. That came up this morning. I mean, that was a big statement. And I didn't realize it was all clogged. The system is all clogged. So we're going to unclog the system, and we're going to go right now into the Oval Office.

Would you like the press to come in with you, Mr. Vice President? Should we let them come in? Otherwise they're going turn around, waiting for the next meeting for six hours. They don't have such an easy job, I'll tell you. They don't have such an easy job.

Q Mr. President, how far are you willing to take your travel ban fight?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, we're going to take it through the system. It's very important. It's very important for the country, regardless of me or whoever succeeds at a later date. I mean, we have to have security in our country. We have to have the ability. When you take some place like Syria, when you take all of the different people pouring — and if you remember, ISIS said, we are going to infiltrate the United States and other countries through the migration. And then we're not allowed to be tough on the people coming in? Explain that one.

So we'll see what happens. We have big court case. We're well-represented. And we're going to see what happens.

Q Is it going to go to the Supreme Court, you think?

THE PRESIDENT: It could. We will see. Hopefully it doesn't have to. It's common sense. You know, some things are law, and I'm all in favor of that. And some things are common sense. This is common sense.

Q Mr. President, if it's unreported or under-reported — “unreported” is the phrase you used yesterday — but if it's under-reported, why do you think the media is not reporting, or America is not caring about this type of —

THE PRESIDENT: I have to know, because I'm reported on possibly more than anybody in the world — I don't think you have anything to say about that. I happen to know how dishonest the media is. I happen to know stories about me that should be good — or bad — you know, I don't

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mind a bad story if it's true. But I don't like bad stories that — stories that should be a positive story when they make them totally negative. I understand the total dishonesty of the media better than anybody. And I let people know it. I mean, the media is a very, very dishonest arm, and we'll see what happens. Not everybody. And I have to say that. I always preface it by saying, not everybody. But there's tremendous dishonest — pure, outright dishonesty from the media.

Let's go into the Oval Office.

(Meeting moves to Oval Office.)

THE PRESIDENT: So they said this is the first President they've ever seen with all the papers on their desk. (Inaudible) cutting the price of the F-35 fighters. We have a lot of papers.

Okay, go ahead, folks.

PARTICIPANT: Mr. President, on behalf of 3,088 sheriffs in America, there is a new sheriff in town, and it's only fitting that we provide you with our sculpture. The first time the NSA has provided a sculpture to a non-law enforcement person. And there is a new sheriff in town — for you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you so much. Thank you. (Applause.) It's beautiful.

END

10:21 A.M. EST