

Public Meeting
National Prison Rape Elimination Commission
at the University of Notre Dame, March 31, 2005

Chairman: I am chairman of the Commission. It's a pleasure to be here. We thank the Notre Dame community for inviting us to participate in this symposium. This is our first public event that we will hold and I think that it's appropriate to be held at this Institution. I was sort of surprised and I guess, in a sense, honored when I received the call from the White House asking me to serve as a member of the Commission and was quite surprised when I was asked to serve as the chairman. It's been a challenge to fit this in my busy schedule since I have a full court docket on the Federal Court in DC. But I agreed to do it because I believe this is a very important issue for the American public to address. I've been in the criminal justice arena in one capacity or another for most of my life. I was in the juvenile justice system as a juvenile delinquent when I was growing up, unfortunately. I then went to law school eventually and became a public defender and worked in a prison in that capacity and became acutely aware of the nature of that problem in that position and then I became a prosecutor and I've been a judge for over twenty years. And I've been, as a result of my position as a judge, responsible, obviously, for incarcerating a large number of people and it's not something I enjoy doing, but it's the unfortunate reality of our society and I say that because I think it's important that it be understood that those of us who are proponents of this issue who feel that we have a human rights obligation to address this problem are from all political elements. I'm sure I am perceived as a conservative. But that has nothing to do with my perspective on this issue because I believe that as a humane society we have an obligation to make sure that when we do incarcerate people, that they are protected from the abuse that often takes place. So I thank all of you for being present. I hope we'll have an interesting and informative dialogue. We intend to

have these type of forums on several different settings to try and get the input from the American public about the problem, and we thank those panelists who are here today. I think we have some people with a wealth of experience who can give us some inside on the magnitude of the problem, their prospective on the problem, their views about what we can do to address the problem and I believe that we'll leave here with a greater knowledge bank of what we can do to ensure that this type of abuse does not occur to inmates when they are incarcerated in our nation's prisons and jails. Rather than me trying to introduce everybody, that would take a lot of time, I'm just going to ask you individually as we... I'll ask you to give us 30 seconds of who you are and then we'll start with you presenting your individual presentations. We ask that you keep your individual presentations to 10 minutes because we'd like to have the commissioners have the opportunity to ask you some questions and we'd like to open the question up to the audience and hopefully we will get some audience participation asking some questions and then we'll have some time of comments by the members of the panel. So first, I'd like to start with Mr. Babbitt, then Commissioner Donahue, Administrator Zanning, Prosecutor Beckman and then Dr. Schwartz. And if you all can, within 30 seconds, tell us who you are and what you do and how you have some association with this issue.