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Commencement of 58 Rhode Island police officers

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

NEWS RELEASE

FROM: ASSISTANT SECRETARY HERBERT F. DeSIMONE

FOR RELEASE AFTER 2:00 p.m., THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1971

Assistant Secretary of Transportation Herbert F. DeSimone today told the graduates of Salve Regina College's Law Enforcement Program that "police alone cannot be expected to put a halt to the growing crime rate of America."

Addressing the commencement exercises for fifty-eight Rhode Island police officers who have earned a baccalaureate or an associate degree at the Newport college, Mr. DeSimone said that "it would be folly in today's society to think that the police officer can stand alone in the fight against crime which jumped 11% nationally last year."

Mr. DeSimone praised the courage and the efforts of the police in waging the continuing battle against crime. He also applauded the interest the graduating policemen display in this battle by completing such programs as the Salve Regina Law Enforcement course on their own time to become more proficient in criminology and community relations. He added that a policeman "well trained in community relations can be among the most effective voices in today's society."

The former two-term Rhode Island Attorney General emphasized, however, that "burgeoning populations, the new sense of permissiveness and problems of the drug age have created a strong need for a unified crime-fighting team which would include not only the frontline police officer but prosecution,

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the courts, correctional and rehabilitative services, and the general public as well."

The common reaction is to look at the policeman as a single entity against crime," Secretary DeSimone continued. "But no matter how well trained our police are, they cannot be expected to cope with the total problem."

Mr. DeSimone said that the Federal Government is providing through the Justice Department's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration 340 million dollars nationally for 1971, including \$1,715,000 for Rhode Island. This money is to be spent by the states to improve the criminal justice system at the local and state level.

He urged that this "great financial support should be directed" toward improving the balance between the elements that combat crime. It is "vitally important that substantial sums be allocated by the states for the improvement of prosecutions, courts, corrective and rehabilitative services as well as for police training and equipment."

It is not enough in this day and age to focus entirely on law enforcement in the streets," Mr. DeSimone continued. We must aid our policemen by providing uniformity of prosecutions, streamlining court procedures, upgrading the correctional system, and by providing for effective drug rehabilitation programs and centers."

Secretary DeSimone said that "we're missing the boat if we don't pull together these services into a unified effort, working together to battle the crime menace. America cannot have safe streets if our prisons and drug rehabilitative centers fail to return a man to Society who is prepared and ready

to once again make a positive contribution to his family and community."

"Our nation must stand behind her police by balancing their activities through vital reform of our system of justice, Mr. DeSimone concluded, "we must not simply emphasize the removal of criminals or addicts from the streets but must focus on the social system that created them in the first place."

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September 8, 1971