

**U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee
Hearing on the Nomination of John D. Ashcroft to be
Attorney General of the United States**

Questions Submitted by Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

**With Comments by Kevin B. Zeese, Executive Director,
Common Sense for Drug Policy Legislative Group**

Questions for Senator John D. Ashcroft:

1. You have sponsored legislation that would require drug testing of all prisoners before their release and would prosecute those who test positive for drug use. But you did not provide funding for drug treatment in your bill.

As Attorney General, you would oversee more than 500 drug courts nationally, and you would oversee treatment for prisoners in federal prisons and grants to states to treat prisoners in their systems.

Q: Do you support drug treatment for criminals as effective crime prevention? Would you vigorously support existing prison-based treatment and work with me to ensure that treatment is provided for those in the criminal justice system who need it?

Ashcroft: Yes. I fully support prison-based treatment for criminal offenders. I look forward to working with you to make it as effective as possible.

Zeese's Comment: As a senator, governor and attorney general Mr. Ashcroft did nothing to support drug treatment programs. He has spoken against drug treatment because it takes money from law enforcement. Senator Ashcroft told a conservative think tank in 1997 "a government which takes the resources that we would devote toward the interdiction of drugs and converts them to treatment resources, and instead of saying 'just say no' says 'just say maybe' or 'just don't inhale' . . . is a government that accommodates us at our lowest and least." (Anthony Lewis, "Out of Sight," *New York Times*, January 6, 2001.) As a result of this history it is hard to believe Senator Ashcroft's response.

12. Most crime occurs in after-school hours when many children are unattended.

Q. What role do you see for the federal government in crime prevention in general and in after-school programs in particular, such as those conducted by Boys and Girls Clubs?

Ashcroft: The President has explained that he is firmly committed to promoting after-school programs. In particular, he has stated that he would introduce legislation to open 100 percent of the 21st Century program's funding to competitive bidding. This will allow youth development groups, local charities, churches, synagogues, mosques and other community and faith-based organizations to compete for these federal funds on an equal footing with schools. In addition,

he has stated that he will empower lower-income parents by providing certificates to help defray the cost of after-school activities of their choosing – whether run by a community group, a neighborhood church, or a local school. He has indicated his desire to add an additional \$400 million a year to the Child Care Development Block Grant to the states to help 500,000 low-income parents pay for after-school programs. As Attorney General, I will fully support the President’s initiatives in these areas.

Zeese’s Comment: This is another example of Senator Ashcroft changing his views during the Attorney General confirmation process. After school programs are the most effective step we can take to prevent adolescent drug abuse. Getting youth interested and involved in activities gives them something to say yes to and not enough time to get involved with drugs. It also provides adult supervision during the hours when parents are working and youth are out of school. Senator Ashcroft did not take steps to increase funding for after school programs as a senator so it is hard to believe he will take such action as Attorney General.