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Juvenile Arson and Firesetting: A Growing Problem?

Joint Committee on Fire, Police, Emergency and Disaster Services

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JUVENILE ARSON AND FIRESETTING: A GROWING PROBLEM?

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON
FIRE, POLICE, EMERGENCY AND DISASTER SERVICES
SENATOR WILLIAM CAMPBELL, CHAIRMAN**

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JUVENILE ARSON AND FIRESETTING:

A GROWING PROBLEM?

JOINT COMMITTEE ON
FIRE, POLICE, EMERGENCY AND
DISASTER SERVICES

85-1-115

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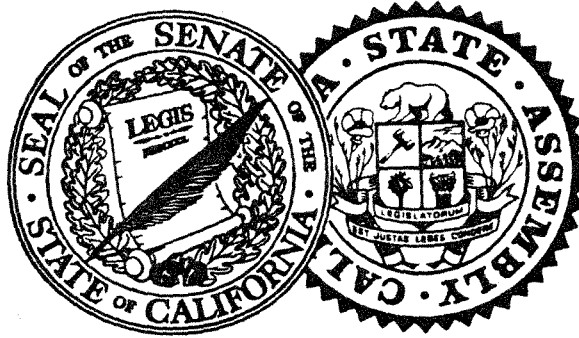
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In the Fall of 1983 the National Firehawk Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to working with children who have a history of firesetting behavior, requested the Joint Committee on Fire, Police, Emergency and Disaster Services to conduct a public hearing on the topic of juvenile arson. In order to understand the extent and motivations of juvenile firesetters, the Joint Committee invited experts from throughout the nation to comment on their experiences, views and recommendations relative to this topic.

The following report is a synopsis of the major issues presented during the hearing conducted on November 15, 1983. The focus of the testimony was on: 1) the classification of arsonists; 2) the lack of adequate data on juvenile arson; and 3) the available treatment and education programs for juvenile firesetters and children. Clearly, the main concern of those participating at this public hearing was the need for a greater commitment by all levels of government and local communities in addressing juvenile arson.

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INTRODUCTION

According to recent arrest statistics, juvenile firesetters are responsible for a significant number of the intentionally set fires in this nation. Although statistical data on arson is limited, available information does indicate that approximately half of all individuals arrested for that crime are juveniles.¹ Therefore, one could assume that juveniles may be a major contributing factor to the nation's alarming arson problem.

Unfortunately, because of the lack of comprehensive statistical data and the limited availability of first hand experience in dealing with juvenile firesetting, it is difficult to accurately define the extent or impact of juvenile arson. However, based on available information, it has been hypothesized that there is a high incidence of juvenile firesetting involving both intentionally set and unintentionally set fires. In order to determine the validity of that hypothesis, it is important that a concerted effort be made to determine the extent and impact of juvenile arson and firesetting. Furthermore, if it is a problem, appropriate treatment programs should be developed to reduce the incidence of juvenile firesetting.

The following chapters will offer the reader a brief review of various elements relating to juvenile

firesetting: 1) the classification of firesetters; 2) the available statistical data on juvenile arsonists; and 3) the treatment of juveniles engaged in firesetting behavior.

CLASSIFICATION OF
"JUVENILE" FIRESETTERS

"According to recent statistics reported by the FBI, juveniles between the ages of 13 and 19 years of age account for 43 percent of all individuals arrested for arson offenses. Alarming as this percentage is, it excludes those juveniles who actually set fires but were arrested for non-arson offenses (such as vandalism or malicious mischief)..."²

Juvenile firesetters are commonly placed in three general age categories: 1) under 8 years old; 2) 9 to 12 years old; and 3) 13 to 17 years old.³ These youths may be furthered classified for placement into one of two categories: "...(1) those who are unaware of the consequences of their actions; and (2) those who fully understand the consequences of their acts and set fires because they want damage, injury, or death to result."⁴ By classifying youths who commit incendiary acts, professionals are better able to identify the appropriate type of assistance or remedial treatment for a particular type of firesetter.

For example, the primary motive behind many intentionally set fires is simple curiosity. In response to that motive, fire prevention programs have been designed to educate juveniles on the dangers of fire and to exhaust their curiosity about fire. Such programs have been effective in substantially reducing firesetting behavior in this group.

Firesetters who are emotionally disturbed or who are distressed present a greater challenge. Among this group of firesetters, prolonged exposure to stressful events may be the key factor in their firesetting behavior.⁵ Many of these juvenile firesetters are simply reacting to extremely stressful situations in their lives by setting fires. Unfortunately, if the seriously disturbed juvenile firesetters are not given proper help, they could become a dangerous threat to not only themselves, but to their families and the communities in which they live.⁶ Therefore, it is important to society that juvenile firesetters have the benefit of appropriate help and treatment. This help may be in the form of public education or individual attention and counseling.

A difficulty in determining the type of help to provide a juvenile firesetter is that the individual's behavior could be the product of any number of different motives. Therefore, in order to develop and provide the appropriate prevention or treatment programs, it becomes extremely important to be able to properly identify and understand the motives behind juvenile firesetting.

There are a number of identified motives for committing arson. The most common motives for juveniles are:

- 1) Vandalism - there are no accurate statistics on the incident of this firesetting act, but authorities

believe it is high, involving primarily schools and vacant buildings;

2) Revenge, spite, jealousy - this firesetting behavior is exhibited by juveniles who have experienced some form of rejection or failure in a close personal setting and do not react constructively to the severe stress of that rejection or failure;

3) Crime concealment - this motive is an attempt to conceal or eliminate visible clues of other crimes that have been committed; and

4) Arson-for-profit and intimidation - some youths are motivated to hire out as "torches" or use arson to extort money or goods.⁷

Dr. Linda E. Weinberger of the University of Southern California's Institute of Psychiatry, Law and Behavioral Science, has developed a simplified categorization of juvenile firesetting motives. Dr. Weinberger has indicated that within the broad category of youngsters who intentionally set fires, there are two subcategories of firesetters, "...those who set fires for pathological reasons and those who set fires for nonpathological reasons."⁸ Juvenile firesetters seldom fall into the category of nonpathological motives, e.g. to destroy evidence, or arson-for-profit.⁹

As noted earlier, a classification system is used in order that the treatment of an individual can be tailored to the motivation. This is important since some juvenile

firesetters will be more responsive to treatment by personal counseling than others. Motives such as curiosity, fascination, or the excitement of seeing fire engines has been effectively curbed through appropriate counseling.

However, available statistics seem to indicate that while approximately 60% of the children involved in known firesetting incidents are simply "curiosity" firesetters, the other 40% appear to be engaged in more than just casual fireplay.¹⁰ Dr. Jessica Gaynor, President of the National Firehawk Foundation and a noted psychologist, believes that for those children who are more than "curiosity" firesetters

"...fireplay is not an isolated problem, but rather a part of a series of behavior and situational problems. These children are involved in recurrent firesetting as an expression of underlying needs or problems in their lives."¹¹

Dr. Gaynor also believes that it is essential to understand the psychology of a juvenile firesetter in order to properly help and treat the individual. Dr. Gaynor favors a system of classifying juvenile firesetting behavior that was developed by Captain Joe Day of the Los Angeles County Fire Department. This system classifies child firesetting behavior into three major categories: 1) little risk, which accounts for 60% of child firesetters; 2) definite risk, which accounts

for only 37% of child firesetters; and 3) extreme risk, 3% of child firesetters.¹²

Recurrent firesetters are those classified as definite or extreme risk, and are distinguished from the little risk group based on specific behavior factors (i.e. energy level, intellect, personality) and situational factors (i.e. family, school).¹³

Children classified as a definite risk are

"...mostly young boys between the ages of 5 to 13. They have been described as more mischievous, energetic, adventurous and aggressive than the average child. They tend to have a very high energy level which is often characterized by excessive restlessness and inattentiveness.

They often exhibit irresponsible and impulsive behavior with a low level for frustration. They are easily prone to thrill-seeking activities which offer them immediate pleasure and gratification. They typically are of average and high intelligence, however, they also are easily distracted and sometimes have short attention spans. These children are socially aggressive with their peers and often need to feel as if they have control and mastery of their environment.

Many of these youngsters come from homes where the father is absent and where they have little opportunity to experience positive and meaningful relationships with adult males. When these children do not have relationships with their fathers, or other adult males, or when they do, the parent figure is often hostile and rejecting and has difficulty¹⁴ in setting limits on behavior."

Children classified as an extreme risk are

"For the most part they are young boys between the ages of 13 to 16. These youngsters are often ruled by their impulses and actively seek stimulation and excitement. They have a long history of delinquent or antisocial acts such as stealing, truancy, and fighting with peers. They are typically defiant and resentful, and are openly hostile to authority. Many are incapable of feeling or expressing any remorse or guilt.

They are generally of average intelligence, however they have little motivation to perform well. These boys have problems establishing and maintaining positive relationships with their friends, teachers, and parents.

These extreme risk youngsters usually set fires out of anger or revenge. They also can be motivated by peer pressure and antagonism for authority. They may be involved with school fires after school authorities have insisted on their suspension or expulsion.

The fires are usually set away from the home and with a group of friends. These children or teenagers will not notify anyone after the fire has started and they will not admit to being involved. Generally, they will be incapable of feeling or expressing any guilt over having started the fire."¹⁵

Again, treatment varies for children who are classified as low, definite, or extreme risk. For example, children classified as low risk may benefit from brief educational programs, those classified as a definite risk may require a long-term counseling

intervention effort, and those of an extreme risk would probably be referred for immediate professional treatment.¹⁶

Whatever the classification, it appears that juvenile firesetters must first be identified, then properly classified and, finally, given the appropriate help. However, to achieve that goal requires the widespread commitment of our communities, professional disciplines, and public resources.

In essence, as Chief Ron Bogardus, P.E., California State Fire Marshal noted

"The unique behavior problems associated with young firesetters cannot be solved by fire and law enforcement officials alone. Parents, teachers, coaches, youth group leaders, neighbors, the entire community must be sensitized to the problem if positive changes are to result."¹⁷

ARSON DATA

"There are several shortcomings in the data that is currently available on arson. What there is is usually fragmented and incomplete. This is a major weakness, and it is recognized by virtually everyone involved in the arson field."¹⁸

Professionals committed to addressing juvenile arson are concerned about the lack of adequate statistical data on the problem. One professional, Ms. Pamela McLaughlin, Founder of the National Firehawk Foundation, believes that the lack of accurate statistical data is a major barrier to our ability to properly address juvenile arson and firesetting. Statistical data is important in order to identify the extent of the juvenile firesetting problem and to be able to evaluate the success of various programs aimed at eliminating the problem.¹⁹

There appears to be three primary reasons for the lack of adequate data: 1) juvenile firesetting has not received sufficient attention and, therefore, resources are not directed to keep proper data or statistics in this area; 2) a data program model has not been developed to record, in a meaningful manner, the few statistics that are accumulated; and 3) many incidents go unreported.

While arson data in general is limited and fragmented, it is especially inadequate in the area of juvenile arson. California's State Fire Marshal, Chief

Ronald W. Bogardus, P.E., stated that "In the case of juvenile firesetter's, this critically needed data is woefully lacking."²⁰ Without comprehensive and accurate information, the nation and the state cannot be confident that if they are properly addressing the problem of juvenile firesetting. Furthermore, as stated earlier, it is virtually impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of those programs combatting juvenile arson if appropriate data is not collected and analyzed. Chief Bogardus claims

"Valid and reliable data is not only essential to such basic tasks as properly identifying the problem, but its equally important to measuring and evaluating the results, and attempted solutions."²¹

The lack of data is particularly frustrating when the tools for collecting the necessary information exist. For example, Chief Bogardus recognized that while California's Fire Incident Reporting System is one of the most comprehensive fire data systems in the United States, the only relevant information it includes on juvenile firesetters is whether or not a child was involved in an arson incident.²² No information is collected on the juvenile as to age, sex, education, personal background, prior incidents of firesetting, or whether alcohol or drugs were involved.

Furthermore, available national statistics on juvenile arson cannot accurately reflect the extent of

the juvenile firesetting problem. National statistics are only a compilation of statistics collected at state and local levels. National data is only as good as the data from which it was derived. Since state and local statistics are extremely limited and lack uniformity in content, the accuracy of the national statistics is questionable.

The lack of proper statistical data can only be corrected if a commitment is made to collect the necessary information. This will require the development of an uniform reporting system that requires the collection of data on juvenile arson. Furthermore, reporting personnel must be trained to properly maintain the records. It should be noted that training is important because the unreliable gathering of data and the erratic reporting of the information could be a result of untrained personnel performing the recording process.²³

CURBING JUVENILE ARSON AND FIRESETTING

Professionals who counsel juvenile firesetters are attempting to help the child understand his/her feelings and to prevent them from expressing those feelings through acts of arson. Counseling is especially applicable for those children engaged in curiosity or nonmalicious firesetting behavior. Public fire education has also been successfully employed to inform juveniles of the danger and destruction of fire, and to defuse their possible interest in playing with fire. Since prevention is considered the ideal deterrent, the use of public education to promote fire safety is often accomplished in the classroom or at home through the television medium.

One of the nations most successful public fire safety education programs is the "Sesame Street Fire Safety Project". Ms. Evelyn Davis of the Children's Television Workshop, noted that by taking advantage of the classroom and the television medium the Sesame Street Fire Safety Project has directly reached more than eight million preschoolers. The program provides the basis for fire safety education of juveniles up to 12 years old.²⁴ Through the appeal of Sesame Street, there has been a serious effort to build a fire safety aware generation.²⁵

However, while public fire education is a major

factor in preventing curiosity and nonmalicious firesetting behavior, programs must also be available to diagnose and treat juvenile firesetters with more serious motives.

Professional diagnosis of the firesetter is important because

"Unless the diagnostic function is handled in a professional manner, the child may be placed in a treatment mode that is entirely unsuited to his or her underlying problem. This goes for youths who may be scheduled to receive too little help, as well as those at the other extreme who may be unnecessarily institutionalized. Because of inadequate diagnosis, the serious firesetting behavior may continue and even grow worse."²⁶

The diagnostic function may be performed by a professional mental health specialist, psychiatrist or psychologist. However, such services are frequently beyond the capability of a community to provide. Therefore, a number of local communities throughout the nation have developed programs utilizing trained fire service personnel to diagnose and counsel juvenile firesetters and, when necessary, to refer more difficult cases to available professional mental health experts.²⁷

Los Angeles County implemented a program that developed a prototype diagnostic and interview instrument for counselors to evaluate the extent of a juvenile's firesetting problem.²⁸ Other departments throughout the

state have also developed their own interview manuals and methods for helping juveniles to address the underlying problems that trigger their firesetting behavior.²⁹

In an effort to reduce the incidence of juvenile arson, several cities in California have implemented programs to educate youth in fire safety and to counsel juvenile firesetters. For example, Los Angeles County began a program in the late 70's in which fire department personnel were trained to identify and counsel youthful firesetters. Over 200 youngsters have been counseled since 1980, and less than three percent have been repeat firesetters.³⁰

The Los Angeles City Fire Department not only has its own program of counseling juvenile firesetters, but the Department also participates in the Los Angeles City Mayor's All Teen Arson Council. This project was designed to

"...bring an awareness to all students of the major financial impact, and the extreme life hazard to themselves and their loved ones that is created by the crime of arson and fire vandalism."³¹

In San Diego, the City Fire Department implemented a counseling program which utilized two trained fire prevention specialists. The success of their program is demonstrated by the fact that after counseling approximately 200 juvenile firesetters, there has been only two repeaters.³²

The San Francisco Fire Department implemented a Juvenile Firesetters Program that not only emphasizes a public fire education approach, but also included a diversion program. The diversion program is designed for firesetters under the age of 14.³³ In this program a juvenile firesetter is matched with a firefighter counselor for weekly meetings and/or outings.

Whatever the specific approach taken by a fire department or local community, it appears that

"The juvenile firesetting programs endeavor to select a level of counseling involvement and length of interaction that are geared to the severity of each child's problem.... .Significantly, all of the programs refer children with serious emotional problems to a mental health agency or professional.... .In no program are the counselors encouraged to hold on to a firesetting youth whose behavior stems from a serious emotional disturbance."³⁴

The success of these local programs indicate that the early detection of juvenile firesetters and the exposure of them to appropriate counseling is a successful approach to curbing juvenile arson in communities throughout the state and nation.

In recognition of the success of such methods, one non-profit foundation in California has developed a successful program that is available to communities throughout the country. This organization is known as the National Firehawk Foundation.

NATIONAL FIREHAWK FOUNDATION

The San Francisco based National Firehawk Foundation, founded by Ms. Pamela McLaughlin, is one of the nation's most prominent non-profit organizations committed to helping juvenile firesetters and resolving the juvenile firesetting problem. As an outgrowth of volunteer work performed for the San Francisco Fire Department, Ms. McLaughlin recognized the value of pairing a firefighter with a juvenile firesetter in an environment of friendship, understanding and counseling to help the juvenile overcome his/her firesetting behavior.

Ms. McLaughlin was assisted by a research project conducted by Dr. Jessica Gaynor and funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Dr. Gaynor's research was instrumental in the development and testing of Ms. McLaughlin's Firehawk idea of utilizing trained firefighters to act as companions and counselors to juvenile firesetters. Ms. McLaughlin sought to pair juvenile firesetters with firefighters

"...who would act as long-term companions to the children, and also monitor any other kinds of health, mental health, family therapy help that they might also require, to make sure that the children got the help that mental health consultants recommended to them."³⁵

Volunteer firefighters who become companions to

juvenile firesetters interact with the child to help raise his/her self-esteem, to teach the juvenile to be more constructive in venting his/her anger, and to educate the individual in fire safety and prevention.³⁶ The program emphasizes the use of community resources and relies on a referral system to ensure that each juvenile firesetter receives all the assistance that is required.³⁷

Currently the National Firehawk Foundation is providing information to local jurisdictions interested in addressing juvenile arson in their own communities. Local areas can establish themselves as Firehawk affiliates and utilize the materials and methods developed by the Foundation. As a non-profit organization, the Foundation attempts to

- "1. Provide a total package that can give the right help to any child interested in fire.
2. Make the most of the abilities and the experience of community and firefighter volunteers.
3. Provide complete training to help volunteers be effective with children.
4. Build another way that fire departments make their communities safe and secure."³⁸

The National Firehawk Foundation has a Board of Directors and an Advisory Council of nationally-recognized leaders from the fire service, mental health, civic, corporate, and political communities. A primary

goal of the Foundation is to reduce the incidence of juvenile fires through research, educational and intervention programs.

As a complement to that goal, there is a need to develop a model juvenile arson probation law. Such a law would take into consideration the conditions for placing a convicted juvenile arsonist on probation. The criminal justice system would be required to have juvenile arsonists properly evaluated in order to determine the appropriate conditions for the youth's probation. Probation would involve a variety of treatment programs designed to help the individual deal with his/her motivation for setting fires.

However, non-profit, community-based programs such as the National Firehawk Foundation cannot address the issue of a model probation law or the problem of juvenile arson alone. As noted earlier, to solve the behavior problems of young firesetters requires the involvement and cooperation of not only our fire and law enforcement officials, but parents, teachers, community leaders, the criminal justice system, psychologists, public agencies, and elected officials as well. Representatives of these groups must be brought together to address the problem of arson. By establishing a cooperative effort committed to solving the juvenile arson problem, the work begun by the National Firehawk Foundation and other programs can be further enhanced and the successful curtailment of juvenile firesetting can be achieved.

CONCLUSION

Some juveniles set fires intentionally. The motivations behind their firesetting acts can range from simple nonmalicious curiosity to complex emotional or psychological problems. Unfortunately, data on the extent, impact, and cause of juvenile arson is severely limited. It has only been recently through the research efforts of such people as Dr. Jessica Gaynor and the experiences of such community-based programs as the National Firehawk Foundation that more attention is being given to the problem of juvenile arson. It is evident that a greater commitment of public and private resources is needed in order to identify and understand juvenile arson, as well as to develop and implement effective programs to address the problem.

From the testimony presented before the Joint Committee on Fire, Police, Emergency and Disaster Services, it is apparent that an initial step in addressing this problem would be the collection of better statistical data. The data should be uniformly collected and analyzed in order to develop the proper solutions for combatting juvenile arson and firesetting. Furthermore, such data is necessary in order to evaluate the success of any prevention or treatment program implemented to address the problem.

Given currently available data and the first hand experience of those working with juvenile firesetters, it

appears that certain methods of prevention and treatment of juvenile arson may be successful. Public education and counseling appears to be effective for curiosity firesetters, while personal, one-on-one counseling and attention is more appropriate for other types of juvenile firesetters.

Community programs, such as the National Firehawk Foundation, have demonstrated an effectiveness in the treatment and counseling of juvenile firesetters. Public education in the classroom and at home is helpful in preventing juveniles from expressing their frustrations through firesetting. However, to properly combat the juvenile firesetting problem, there must be a commitment of federal, state, and local public entities; law enforcement and fire service agencies; and the general public. This is essential to not only demonstrate an interest, but to support those programs and efforts dedicated to addressing juvenile arson and firesetting.

Juvenile arson and firesetting is a problem that should not be overlooked or dismissed as insignificant. There is reason to believe that this problem, if left unaddressed, could be responsible for a growing and significant loss of life and property to fire. Therefore, a serious effort must be made to: 1) determine the extent of the problem; 2) develop and implement appropriate programs for the evaluation and treatment of juvenile firesetters; 3) develop a model probation law

that allows the judicial system to effectively address the problem of juvenile arson and to best treat juvenile firesetters; and 4) support effective community-based programs addressing the problem of juvenile firesetting.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The California State Legislature should memorialize the Federal Government to direct resources into the collection and analysis of data on the problem of juvenile arson and firesetting; and

2. A uniform reporting system should be developed and adopted by all levels of government and all reporting agencies for the collection and compilation of data on juvenile arson and firesetting; and

3. The California State Fire Marshal's Office should be requested to produce a report on the extent of juvenile arson and firesetting in this State. Furthermore, the Office should be requested to recommend how State resources could best be utilized to combat juvenile arson and firesetting; and

4. The California State Legislature should establish a Task Force on Juvenile Arson to develop a model probation law, including conditions of probation,

for juvenile firesetters. The goal of the model law would be to ensure that juvenile firesetters are properly identified, evaluated and provided with appropriate treatment programs.

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1 CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE
2 JOINT COMMITTEE ON FIRE, POLICE,
3 EMERGENCY AND DISASTER SERVICES

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8 HEARING ON:
9 ARSON AND JUVENILE FIRESETTING

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13
14 Tuesday, November 15, 1983
15 9:40 O'Clock A.M.

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17 City of Commerce Council Chambers
18 5655 Jillson Street
19 Commerce, California

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21 Senator William Campbell, Chairman
22 Assemblyman Mike Roos, Vice Chairman
23 Senator Alfred Alquist
24 Speaker Willie L. Brown, Jr.
25 Senator William A. Craven
26 Senator Ed Davis
27 Assemblyman Patrick Nolan
28 Assemblyman Louis J. Papan
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1 COMMERCE, CALIFORNIA, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1983, 9:40 A.M.

2
3 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Good morning ladies and gentlemen.
4 Today the Joint Committee on Fire, Police, Emergency and
5 Disaster Services will be conducting a hearing on the topic of
6 arson and juvenile firesetting. I'm Senator William Campbell,
7 Chairman of this Joint Committee.

8 I have requested your presence today to discuss the
9 inference that juvenile firesetters may account for an
10 alarming proportion of our arson fires. It was brought to the
11 attention of this Committee that during the past decade over
12 50 percent of those arrested for the crime of arson were under
13 the age of 18. Even more disturbing was the fact that
14 approximately 11 percent of those arrested were under the age
15 of 10.

16 Arson is a serious crime, and each year it claims
17 the lives of hundreds of victims, and injures thousands more,
18 and is responsible for approximately \$4 billion in property
19 loss. In fact, it is estimated that arson costs the American
20 public close to \$15 billion annually in direct and related
21 costs.

22 If we believe that the statistics showing a majority
23 of arrested arsonists are juveniles, then it would seem logical
24 to direct resources towards the juvenile firesetting problem.
25 We could possibly reduce the loss of life and property to arson
26 if we were able to control the incidence of juvenile firesetting.
27 However, we are still not sure of the extent of the juvenile
28 arson problem. Therefore, we must attempt to gain a better

1 understanding of this issue. The fact that there may be some
2 disagreement as to whether or not juvenile arson is a major
3 problem underscores the need to hold this hearing.

4 Today we have experts from throughout the state and
5 the nation who will be commenting on arson and juvenile fire-
6 setting. We will explore such areas as: the extent of the
7 problem, the need to collect better statistical data on arson,
8 the motivations behind juvenile firesetting, and what the public
9 could do to reduce the incidence of juvenile arson. Hopefully,
10 we will gain a better understanding of this subject area and,
11 therefore, be in a better position to identify the appropriate
12 steps and programs to curb juvenile arson and firesetting.

13 I'd like to introduce at this time Senator Ed Davis,
14 a member of the Committee who has just joined us, and we'll
15 begin this morning with our first witness who will be Pamela
16 McLaughlin, the founder and Chair of the National Firehawk
17 Foundation. Pamela?

18 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Senator Campbell, and
19 before I begin my testimony, I would like to convey the
20 greetings of Chief William Powell of Sacramento, and Chief
21 Theodore Coleman of Washington, D.C., two of my advisory
22 board members who cannot be here today.

23 I am the founder of the National Firehawk Foundation,
24 a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping child firesetters.
25 While my following remarks are based on my own personal
26 experience, I address you today not as an individual, but as
27 a representative of the hundreds of fire service men and women
28 who have joined our foundation -- arson investigators, fire

1 chiefs, fire marshals and public education officers from across
2 the country who have not been able to sleep at night because
3 of children seen in their everyday work that they could not
4 help.

5 Children like David, an eight year old abused child
6 in Wyoming who is responsible for five mobile home fires; or
7 Georgie, a three year old boy in Wisconsin who burned his
8 entire house down when his father left home; or Charlie, a
9 San Francisco seven year old who had been sexually molested
10 the first time he was left out of his house by himself, and
11 who crept into a closet and burned all the sleeves off of his
12 shirts.

13 After seeing children like these, fire service
14 officials and representatives who already work long and hard
15 hours on their jobs, call our Foundation with a request that
16 I know many in this room today will find hard to believe --
17 they wish to spend their own personal time in order to make
18 sure child firesetters in their community have the attention
19 and guidance needed to stop firesetting and grow up properly.

20 As word of the Firehawk Children's Program has
21 become known in the fire service, my associate, Dr. Jessica
22 Gaynor and myself have found ourselves running an organization
23 that now has approximately 96 affiliates in 22 states with
24 approximately 60 requests for our program coming in each week.

25 I'd like to add that we're both working about 60
26 hours a week as volunteers to keep up with the requests that
27 are pouring in for information about child firesetters. What
28 we're seeing is that all of our affiliates, and the people that

1 call and write to us are voicing similar concerns, which have
2 prompted our testifying at this hearing, and which direct
3 future actions of our Foundation.

4 These concerns are centered in two areas: Number
5 one is the need for more accurate statistics on child
6 firesetters and the extent and nature of the child arson
7 problem. Number two, the development of more humane practices
8 of handling these children, which can also better protect
9 communities.

10 In order to highlight the need for improvement in
11 these two areas, I would like to briefly recount my own
12 experience with child firesetters, and what has led me and
13 many fire service officials to become concerned and involved
14 in helping these children.

15 I think the work that was done in Los Angeles
16 County, which I'm also going to discuss for one moment, has
17 done more to help the child firesetters, and firefighters who
18 are trying to help child firesetters than anything in the
19 whole world, and I think that we -- the Firehawk Foundation
20 owes a tremendous debt to Chief Bragdon and Captain Joe Day.

21 In 1979, the U.S. Fire Administration, a part of the
22 Federal Emergency Management Agency, acting upon new statistics
23 that showed approximately half of the arson problem was caused
24 by juveniles, turned to Chief Clyde Bragdon of the Los Angeles
25 County Fire Department to develop a categorization and
26 screening program for child firesetters, which could be used
27 by fire service personnel. The program was to be based on work
28 done by Captain Joe Day of this department in conjunction with

1 psychologist Kenneth Fineman.

2 Some of the preliminary results from their work
3 indicated that child firesetters could be divided into three
4 categories: low concern, or curiosity firesetters; medium
5 concern firesetters who are children who repeatedly lit fires;
6 and very high concern children. One of their other findings
7 was that approximately 85 percent of the children that were
8 medium concern firesetters were fatherless boys.

9 At that time, I was working as a special projects
10 volunteer in the San Francisco Fire Department, and I had
11 noticed that there were quite a few fatherless boys coming
12 into our department for recurrent firesetting. Many of these
13 children that I started interviewing and working with also
14 had histories of child abuse and negligence, or learning
15 disabilities. What happened to these kids greatly disturbed me
16 and I wished that there was something that I could do as a
17 mother of two boys to help these children.

18 What in particular bothered me, and I guess started
19 the Firehawk Foundation was that many of the children that we
20 saw for firesetting were being punished for their home
21 environment, or for being an abused child, that they were
22 put perfunctorily into a juvenile court system where the people
23 there would have liked to help them more than they could.

24 I'm not criticizing the social welfare system, or
25 mental health psychologists, but they didn't have the
26 resources, or they could not spend the time to help some of
27 these kids. So what would happen to the typical kid that we
28 would turn up who might be seven or eight years old, would be

1 a child that the fire service reprimanded strongly. If that
2 didn't work, there were repeated episodes. Fire department
3 personnel, to get the children the help they needed, if there
4 was perhaps suspected abuse, would have to turn them over to
5 the juvenile authorities.

6 When the kid got to the juvenile authorities,
7 usually there wasn't much that they would do with the children,
8 and they would sort of check the child out and release them,
9 and the child would go back to firesetting. These patterns
10 would continue for quite a few years, and nothing was done,
11 the fires would get bigger, finally the child would be sent
12 off to something like the California Youth Authority.

13 I just didn't think that that was right, and
14 fortunately, many people in the City of San Francisco, and
15 the Federal Government agreed with me. Chief Andy Casper, at
16 the time, was the Chief of the San Francisco Fire Department,
17 and since Joe Day down in Los Angeles had developed a very
18 good screening and categorization system to get to recurrent
19 firesetters, he suggested to the U.S. Fire Administration
20 that a pilot test be done on an idea that I had had while I
21 was a volunteer, and that is, since most of the child fire-
22 setters that we were seeing in San Francisco were fatherless
23 boys, why not pair them with firefighters who would act as
24 long-term companions to the children, and also monitor any
25 other kinds of health, mental health, family therapy help
26 that they might also require, to make sure that the children
27 got the help that mental health consultants recommended to them.

28 The U.S. Fire Administration thought that this was a

1 good idea, and we received a two year pilot grant which ran
2 from 1980 to 1982. Our program was 100 percent successful.
3 We used approximately 25 to 30 firefighter volunteers who were
4 paired up with recurrent child firesetters.

5 Now, you might wonder what our definition of
6 recurrent child firesetters are. I'm talking about pretty
7 heavy duty kids. No kid was too tough for us, and we had
8 many instances where the types of fires that were set could
9 have killed the inhabitants of the house.

10 For example, one child that successfully went
11 through our program had lit a series of fires through a
12 neighborhood, including setting a porch on fire where an
13 older woman lived. He was brought into our program, and
14 paired up with a firefighter, received other forms of
15 treatment and tutoring, and he's fine.

16 We also found out from being with him, and evaluating
17 him that he was a gifted child that no one had bothered to
18 give an intelligence test to.

19 Another child that we did take into the program, and
20 that we paired with a firefighter who said that he wanted the
21 toughest kid that we could find, and I actually waited until
22 we found the toughest kid for this toughest firefighter, was
23 a child that was approximately 10 years of age, was living
24 with his stepfather and mother in the house with new twin
25 babies.

26 The boy felt that he had never gotten any attention
27 or love, and one night, after a history of firesetting, when
28 his parents had just chastised him for not doing his homework,

1 he took some plastic bags down into the basement of his home
2 while his parents were cooking dinner and lit a significant
3 fire in the basement, closed the door, and left the house.

4 Fortunately for the family, they weren't asleep,
5 and the fire was caught and put out. Now, we felt that that
6 child could be salvaged, and I think that is sort of the type
7 of child that we're trying to reach out to, a child that
8 without some understanding from professionals, without some
9 love and understanding from some concerned individuals, might
10 skip over onto the other side and become a fairly dangerous
11 individual, and at least a juvenile delinquent.

12 As we began our program in San Francisco, we started
13 to receive requests from around the country about our program,
14 and also, there were some concerns voiced. Weren't we
15 actually going to be increasing fires by perhaps having all
16 the kids want to spend time around the fire department, and
17 be with firefighters?

18 Weren't we actually probably going to be exciting
19 these kids more, something like putting an alcoholic in a
20 brewery? Where would you get volunteers for a program like
21 this, were some of the questions that were asked. So we
22 waited two years until the pilot test was done, and there were
23 no further incidences of child firesetting among these kids,
24 until we could be perfectly sure that there was volunteer
25 participation, that a community would get behind this program,
26 and that the work that we said we were doing to reduce child
27 firesetters could be scientifically proven to be successful.

28 Approximately last year, our pilot test from the

1 Federal Government was successfully concluded, and a manual
2 which is about 300 pages long has become available to fire
3 departments around the country through a foundation called
4 the National Firehawk Foundation. The Foundation has an
5 advisory board of 53 fire service leaders from around the
6 country who are involved with child firesetting issues, and
7 who run some of the biggest and smallest departments in the
8 country.

9 They stand behind the program, I believe, because in
10 each community, no matter where they are, they all have a
11 problem of child firesetters. The problems that they see are
12 not statistical problems, they are with actual individual
13 children, some as young as three or four that they can't help,
14 that in increasing numbers, in part because of the cutbacks
15 in social services are actually just sort of washing up at
16 the doors of fire departments.

17 In order to enable the Firehawk Foundation to
18 successfully increase the work we're doing, and to spread,
19 I would like to ask this Committee for one thing, and that is
20 that there is a lack of accurate statistics within the fire
21 service, to either use as a baseline for judging the success
22 of any kind of efforts to eliminate child firesetting. Also,
23 to know the true extent of the problem.

24 If someone came to me and said, child firesetting is
25 a lot less than you think it is, that would make me actually
26 very happy. But right now, the only statistic that we have
27 that's easily available to the fire service is the FBI Uniform
28 Crime Report. The last one that was issued, in September of

1 1983 said that approximately 8,000 youths from around the
2 country were arrested for arson.

3 Now, as many of my arson investigators who are
4 Firehawk coordinators tell me, this is not a really good,
5 accurate picture, for they say that only dumb arsonists get
6 caught, and in this case, dumb can be a little kid.

7 They would like to see a much more sophisticated
8 statistical system set up so that we know the ages of the
9 children involved, primarily, but also we know about kids who
10 are not arrested, but kids that are using it as a cry for
11 help, child abuse, things like that.

12 One of the problems that we're having, at least in
13 California, is while we keep beautiful, wonderful statistics,
14 and a lot of them are in child firesetters, and while we're
15 one of the most advanced states in the country in this regard,
16 some of the information that gets filtered in because of lack
17 of information on the part of the fire service, doesn't get
18 put in any meaningful way into our statistical recordkeeping
19 systems.

20 For example, if there is a room and contents fire
21 started by a child, many times the parents will plead with the
22 firefighter to have that put down as an accidental fire. There
23 might be a case of abuse going on. The firefighters are
24 unskilled, or not trained to know if there is or not. So
25 statistics like that are not included in our -- meaningfully
26 in our SFIRS system right now.

27 We also have some other problems with our statistical
28 recordkeeping processes, and that is that we need in California

1 to have in our annual report that is wonderful, some meaningful
2 way that the child firesetting statistics can be presented to
3 the average person. I'm hoping that one result of this hearing
4 will be that California, which has been the leader in child
5 firesetter programs, can put together a meaningful statistical
6 model that can be used and implemented in other states with the
7 goal being to present a few different kinds of beautiful
8 statistical models that can be incorporated into the national
9 fire incident reporting system so that we have a clearer
10 understanding of the nature of the child firesetting problems,
11 other than of the little unlucky children -- or lucky, perhaps,
12 because they get help, that end up in the FBI Uniform Crime
13 Reports.

14 For your information, one of the other areas that
15 our Foundation will be focusing on in the coming years, besides
16 trying to keep up with the demand for our program, will be in
17 trying to work out some models for the humane treatment of
18 children -- child firesetters in the juvenile justice system
19 that also will better protect our community.

20 As a volunteer, one of the things that I noticed was
21 these kids might have some problems, and they would be put in
22 jail for maybe three weeks, and then released. Surely there
23 is a better way to protect our community and help the children
24 than that system.

25 We intend, in California first of all, to sit down
26 with the District Attorneys' Association, judges, the police,
27 arson investigators, and work out a fair treatment program so
28 that these kids just aren't turned back into society again to

1 go light more fires.

2 I think that approximately a year or two from now
3 the results from this hearing are going to be felt all over
4 the country, because I know that the next speaker, Mr. Fred
5 Vilella is a representative of the Federal Government, has
6 taken a lot of interest in what is happening in California,
7 and I think right now it would be his time to talk about the
8 federal involvement with this hearing, and with child fire-
9 setting. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you. Senator Davis, any
11 questions?

12 SENATOR DAVIS: Perhaps one of Ms. McLaughlin. I
13 don't quite understand how you expect us to do something to get
14 better data about what actually happened because -- okay, only
15 the fireman there who takes a report has any possibility of
16 making out a report, out of which you might make some surmises.

17 So it seems that -- I'm trying to figure out the role
18 of the State Legislature. We don't make laws on how to take --
19 how the police take crime reports.

20 MS. McLAUGHLIN: One part of that would be that we
21 need better education, better public education, and today
22 there will be some speakers who will address that, and yes,
23 you're right, your Committee, in a sense, cannot help with
24 the education of on-line firefighters.

25 But what you can help us with is that in California,
26 you have collected a lot of meaningful data on child firesetters
27 that has not been assembled in any meaningful way that I can
28 even tell you off the top of my head from your annual report of

1 the SFIRS system what kind of child firesetting incidences we
2 have in California.

3 Because you are so far advanced, compared to let's
4 say New Jersey, it would take a lot less -- you have more
5 expertise, and it would take less effort for you to put your
6 statistics around and compile them in a more meaningful
7 fashion. I believe that Chief Bogardus is here today to
8 explore the costs of doing something like that.

9 SENATOR DAVIS: Has that been discussed with the
10 State Fire Marshal?

11 MS. McLAUGHLIN: I've mentioned and suggested it to
12 him.

13 SENATOR DAVIS: Okay, thank you.

14 MS. McLAUGHLIN: Um-hmm.

15 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you, Pamela. Our next
16 witness this morning will be the Director of the Training
17 Center for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA),
18 Fred Villella. Fred?

19 MR. VILLELLA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman,
20 Senator Davis. I'm the Associate Director of the Federal
21 Emergency Management Agency, appointed by the President of the
22 United States, and confirmed by the Senate, responsible for
23 fire training programs, and the United States Fire Administration
24 which represents the federal focus on the nation's fire problem.

25 It's my privilege to appear before the Joint
26 Committee this morning. The President of the United States
27 and the nation's fire service appreciate your efforts, in
28 courage and leadership in this critical area -- children in

1 need of attention.

2 I commend to you the growing efforts as well, not
3 only the leadership of your fire departments throughout this
4 great state, but also the firefighters who are in growing
5 numbers contributing their time and efforts to assist these
6 children in need of attention.

7 Now, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, by
8 Executive Order of the President and Act of Congress, is the
9 federal agency responsible for the coordination of other
10 federal agencies in times of emergencies. FEMA is also respon-
11 sible for supporting state and local governments in a wide
12 range of disaster planning, preparedness, mitigation, response,
13 and recovery efforts. This Agency serves, as well, as the
14 federal focus on the national fire problem through its United
15 States Fire Administration and National Fire Academy.

16 America is still burning. Although there has been an
17 improvement in a number of communities throughout the nation
18 in reducing the nature and impact from fire, there continues
19 to be unacceptable losses of life and property. A single loss
20 of life from fire, the tragedy of a destroyed home, crippling
21 burns and injuries, or increased economic losses cannot be
22 ignored.

23 FEMA, through the United States Fire Administration,
24 is concentrating on the prevention of fire, as well as the
25 detection and control in the early phases of fire development.
26 I believe the widespread application of automatic sprinkler
27 systems, coupled with approved detection systems would be a
28 giant step forward in eliminating, or at least significantly

1 reducing the toxic fire gas problem.

2 The primary focus of the United States Fire Adminis-
3 tration in this fiscal and in the forthcoming fiscal year will
4 be in the area of a truly national fire prevention program of
5 which children in need of attention, and child firesetters
6 will be a very critical part. It is the ultimate goal of the
7 administration to provide the means of making available to
8 every American a fire safe home.

9 We propose to accomplish this goal through a unified
10 program that would involve not only the nation's resources,
11 community volunteers, fire service and private sector. This
12 program will be focused through the Governor's offices of each
13 state, and will reach the local community in a very clear and
14 focused manner.

15 I have submitted to you, Mr. Chairman, my statement
16 for the record. I would like to briefly summarize the salient
17 points of that statement.

18 The juvenile fire problem continues to be of major
19 concern to local law enforcement and fire departments nationwide
20 and justifiably so. The 1982 FBI Uniform Crime Report indicates
21 that 37 percent of those arrested for arson alone were under
22 18 years of age. Although it is slightly lower than 1981, it
23 is still nearly 10 percent higher than the base year that we
24 have chosen to compare against of 1978.

25 These nationwide statistics show that the juvenile
26 firesetter problem is a continuing significant portion of the
27 overall national fire problem. Many local experiences reflect
28 even more frightening statistics. Some local communities have

1 reported that nearly 50 percent of their fires, reported fires
2 were caused by juveniles. Although these statistics are valid
3 for arson fires, they fall short of providing the appropriate
4 needed information.

5 The National Fire Incident and Reporting System
6 currently cannot capture the necessary information. Many fire
7 departments realize the urgency of the juvenile firesetter
8 problem. Some began to develop programs with the help of
9 psychologists, mental health care specialists, educators, and
10 other professionals.

11 The Federal Emergency Management Agency became
12 involved with this program in 1979 when the problem was
13 originally brought to the attention of the United States Fire
14 Administration by Captain Joseph Day of the Los Angeles County
15 Fire Department who joined with Dr. Kenneth Fineman of
16 Huntington Beach and embarked upon a study supported by the
17 Federal Government, to look at the problem and develop some
18 suggested intervention strategies to deal with the issue of
19 young firesetters.

20 As a result of that effort, the juvenile firesetter
21 counseling manual and videotapes were produced. The manual,
22 "Interviewing and Counseling Juvenile Fire Setters" has been
23 issued to hundreds of departments throughout the nation. The
24 State of California has been a leader in the Juvenile Fire-
25 setter Program since its very inception.

26 The recently created National Firehawk Foundation
27 grew from a FEMA sponsored program, designed to determine the
28 feasibility of involving firefighter volunteers as counselors

1 to children firesetters in a one-on-one setting. This is one
2 example of a federally supported private program in support of
3 state and local efforts that is being continued with all
4 private sector resources and support. It is being expanded
5 into other parts of the nation as well.

6 There are now Firehawk affiliates formed in over
7 100 communities in 22 states. These communities range from
8 metropolitan cities and counties such as Washington, D.C.,
9 Prince Georges County, Maryland, to small towns such as
10 Freeport, Texas.

11 FEMA has enhanced efforts in the Juvenile Firesetter
12 Program through joint United States Fire Administration and
13 National Fire Academy efforts in cooperation with the Burn
14 Concerns of Chicago. These include the continued delivery of
15 juvenile firesetter counseling workshops.

16 In the recent past, the workshops have been targeted
17 to the development of counseling programs for firesetters
18 seven years of age and under. For firesetters seven years of
19 age and under. The program is now scheduling workshops that
20 will be designed to establish counseling programs targeted
21 for the child 7 to 13 years of age.

22 Since 1980, approximately 194 workshops in 41 states
23 have been conducted for 13,000 fire service, law enforcement,
24 social service, and judicial agency personnel. Other current
25 efforts include a national conference to bring together repre-
26 sentatives of existing juvenile firesetter programs to exchange
27 information and ideas, identify needs, and develop future
28 direction for the program.

1 We plan to continue at the federal level the
2 dissemination of the juvenile firesetters counseling program
3 through a wide range of approaches, including workshops,
4 seminars, and satellite teleconferences. As more local fire-
5 setter counseling programs are established, it is expected that
6 a resource network will also be established, linking many of
7 these programs together to allow the sharing of information and
8 ideas.

9 We hope in that same process to deal with law
10 enforcement and the other community-based organizations who
11 must be a part of sharing that information for the benefit of
12 the child in need of attention.

13 In addition to assisting local communities in
14 developing fire safety programs to address the juvenile
15 firesetter problem, the Federal Emergency Management Agency
16 has also spearheaded efforts to develop fire prevention
17 approaches aimed at the problem of fire safety and very young
18 children. It is estimated that 17 percent of fire deaths in
19 the United States are children under five years of age.

20 I would digress for a moment, and tell you Mr.
21 Chairman, that arson is a very sexy subject throughout the
22 United States, but it cannot nearly be as sexy as that
23 statistic which I just reported -- 17 percent of the fire
24 deaths are children under five years of age.

25 In cooperation with the Children's Television Network
26 Workshop, the Sesame Street Fire Safety Program was created to
27 reach these young children, and it is estimated to have reached
28 8 million preschoolers to date. The Sesame Street program

1 continues to be one of the most far-reaching fire safety
2 programs, reaching parents, children, young children, and
3 older children as well. Its popularity continues to grow, and
4 its results will be detailed by Evelyn Davis of the Children's
5 Television Workshop, scheduled to testify later.

6 We propose to launch before the end of this fiscal
7 year a program that encompasses community-based participation
8 at the state and local level under the umbrella of the
9 National Fire Prevention Program through community volunteers
10 of which the Firehawk Program, and the Juvenile Firesetter
11 Program will be a very critical component.

12 The goal is to work on a national strategy basis to
13 stop Amercia from burning using local volunteer resources,
14 public and private sector, and encouraging states to assist
15 and institutionalize the process of fire prevention at the
16 local level through community volunteers.

17 A national review panel is about to be formed. The
18 President of the United States has indicated his support, and
19 will participate in this process, and the panel will be made
20 up of nationally and locally prominent members from the
21 public and private sectors and shared by a governor and a
22 national fire service leader.

23 The Federal Emergency Management Agency, through the
24 United States Fire Administration, and the National Fire
25 Academy has been committed to addressing the fire problem as
26 it impacts children. Through the development of successful
27 fire prevention, fire protection, and fire safety programs,
28 such as the Juvenile Firesetter Counseling Program, and the

1 Sesame Street Fire Safety Program, coupled with the emerging
2 initiative to bring together those community-based organizations,
3 major reductions in the children and fire problem can be
4 achieved, and will be continued in our efforts to deal with
5 this national problem.

6 In partnership with state and local government
7 agencies such as this body, private sector groups, we are
8 confident that this trend will continue.

9 In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you
10 for inviting us to participate and testify before this
11 Committee. It is hoped that more hearings in more states will
12 be held on this very serious problem. It is not unexpected
13 that California would take the leadership in the nation to
14 perform this valuable service.

15 The Federal Emergency Management Agency recognizes
16 the need for a concerted effort on the part of local, state
17 and national organizations, both private and public to reduce
18 the national fire problem, and in particular, the problem
19 associated with children in need of attention. California
20 flourishes with outstanding leadership at the state and
21 community level. We urge your continued efforts to focus this
22 leadership to help our children.

23 That is the summary of my statement, Mr. Chairman.
24 I'd be delighted to take on any questions, and I expect that
25 the nation's fire service will look to me to provide some
26 leadership in order to improve the reporting system which we
27 acknowledge. It is sparse in this very critical area.

28 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Mr. Villella, thank you very

1 kindly. We appreciate your coming here today, and we
2 appreciate the work that you have done in this area, and you'll
3 be hearing from us again.

4 MR. VILLELLA: Thank you very much, Senator.

5 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you.

6 The next witness will be Rod Bennett, Fire Inspector
7 with the San Francisco Fire Department. Mr. Bennett.

8 MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senators.

9 I'm here today representing the San Francisco Fire Department,
10 the International Association of Black Firefighters, and the
11 National Firehawk Association.

12 I am currently working on assignment as an arson
13 inspector in the Bureau of Fire Prevention in San Francisco.
14 I've been there for the last two years. It's in this
15 capacity that I first had a chance to meet Ms. McLaughlin and
16 learned of her Firehawk Program.

17 First of all, I'm not going to talk about a lot of
18 the statistics, because as she said, statistics can be very
19 deceiving, and when it comes to arson, very difficult to
20 categorize a fire, especially if there's no one around when
21 you come to put it out.

22 Instead, I'd like to comment on some of the human
23 aspects of the Firehawk Program. It's been said a couple of
24 times here today that almost half of the arson fires in this
25 country have been set by children. You can imagine the impact
26 of that statement when it comes in terms of property damage
27 and/or lives.

28 But in the past, the treatment for a child firesetter

1 has been a punitive one. It's always been, throw the kid in
2 the juvenile hall, a log cabin, or a CYO camp, or something of
3 this nature. But has this been an effective treatment? I
4 would say no. We're dealing with a kid here, not a criminal.
5 There might be underlying motives for the kid's behavior.

6 Through hours of agonizing and analyzing case
7 histories of child firesetters, Ms. McLaughlin, and Dr. Jessica
8 Gaynor, over here, came up with a profile of a typical child
9 firesetter that goes like this:

10 One, his age is 5 to 13 years old.

11 Two, he usually comes from a single parent home,
12 usually where the father is absent, and

13 Three, some change has usually occurred in the
14 family, either they've moved, or switched schools, or the
15 parent has lost his job, something traumatic of that nature.

16 It's interesting to note here that in this profile,
17 there's no mention at all of race, or economic background,
18 that is to say whether a child is Black, White, rich or poor
19 does not come into effect.

20 Most of these kids are striving for an attention of
21 some sort when they set these fires, and naturally if you
22 set the house on fire, you're going to get some attention,
23 whether it's negative or whatever, the kid's just looking for
24 attention, he'll take any, as it comes.

25 Now, secondly, I'd like to say that our type of
26 approach is similar to the Big Brother. We're all firemen,
27 we all pick up a kid, we take him to the fire house and slide
28 down the poles, put little hats on them, we take them to all

1 the ball games, and soccer, things of this nature around --
2 maybe once a month we go to some sort of an event, and what
3 it does is, it picks up the kid's esteem.

4 My kid last year was seven years old, he came from
5 an interracial family, just a wife, and the father was gone,
6 and he was living with his grandmother, and the mother had
7 moved to Modesto, or in the valley, so he was just there by
8 himself with the grandmother. He set the fires, I guess because
9 he felt that he was neglected, or left by himself.

10 Now, from my point of view, the firemen that I know,
11 our reward is to look in the kid's eyes, we take these kids
12 and all of a sudden they've found someone that takes an
13 interest in them for their sick, and this is a reward for me,
14 as well as it is for the kids, because to me, it's very
15 fulfilling to have accomplished something like this in the
16 life of a kid, lead him on the right path, or something, and
17 for some strange reason, they seem to look upon firemen as
18 really the good guys in life.

19 Anyway, in closing, I'd like to say that everyone,
20 whether you're young, old, Black, White, whatever, needs to
21 be -- feel that you're needed or wanted, and this is what
22 these kids are doing. The only really important statistic
23 that I'd like to bring to mind is the success rate of the
24 kids that enter our program, it's 99.9 percent.

25 In other words, 99.9 percent of the kids that came
26 into our program did not restart fires again, and that record
27 speaks for itself. One kid out of 160 started another fire.
28 Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Bennett, we
2 appreciate you coming down, we appreciate your testimony today.

3 MR. BENNETT: Thank you. At this time, I'd like
4 to introduce Dr. Jessica Gaynor, she'd like to show a short
5 video of the program as seen on "Hour Magazine".

6 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: I have Jessica scheduled for
7 about three witnesses from now.

8 MR. BENNETT: Okay.

9 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Do you have a time problem? Do
10 you have a plane to catch or something?

11 DR. GAYNOR: No, it's actually part of his testimony.

12 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: It's part of his testimony?
13 Come on up, then.

14 (Video Presentation.)

15 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you very much. Our next
16 witness will be Chief Clyde Bragdon of the Los Angeles County
17 Fire Department.

18 CHIEF BRAGDON: And I might add, Hacienda Heights.

19 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Yes, Chief of the Hacienda
20 Heights Fire Department.

21 CHIEF BRAGDON: Good morning, Mr. Chairman. It is
22 appropriate, I think, my placement on the agenda, having the
23 opportunity to follow what has given significant efforts and
24 direction towards a universal problem in this country.

25 The Firehawks program represents certainly private
26 sector involvement, is a splendid example of volunteers and
27 the public sector working together towards a common goal. FEMA
28 and the U.S. Fire Administration has served as a catalyst, a

1 clearinghouse, and federal focus. They do not interview one
2 juvenile firesetter. However, through their efforts, we have
3 maximized on a national basis attention to this problem, and
4 to Inspector Bennett, certainly a practitioner who literally
5 is working the streets and addressing this problem.

6 Perhaps too much emphasis will be given to statistics,
7 and statistics only serve to identify the problem, to give
8 measurement standards, to attain funding, and may reinforce
9 what we're after. Our real emphasis should be addressing
10 the problem itself, and that's the problem of dealing with
11 juveniles in our society.

12 We will hear testimony today from a number of
13 persons relative to this problem, for fires attributable to
14 juveniles. We've already heard some of the data which arranges,
15 and if you pick up every document, ranging as high as 50
16 percent to maybe a low of 25 percent. That should not really
17 be our emphasis.

18 In our community, like most others in this nation,
19 arson has been on the increase. We've also added an increase
20 in the fires started by juveniles, for whatever the reasons.
21 Statistics are extremely important, as I've previously
22 emphasized, but they should not be our total direction.

23 Juveniles start fires for a variety of reasons:
24 revenge, intimidation, jealousy, mental retardation, vandalism,
25 crime concealment, profit, certainly emotional problems caused
26 in the home.

27 I have two case studies here which I will submit
28 with the documentation, but I will not repeat today, but they

1 are typical of what our investigators and interviews run into.
2 Both of these cases had different resolutions, however. One
3 is a consequence of getting involved in the interview process
4 and having an appropriate referral to psychologists, and
5 people that can deal with those problems, because the parents
6 decided to get involved.

7 The other case, it did not, we have not solved that
8 problem. It will serve further to aggravate that young child's
9 situation and his place in life.

10 For years the fire community has been concerned about
11 the child firesetter. Some departments made an attempt at
12 solutions. Parents would bring their youngsters into the fire
13 station, most typically, and firefighters thought they had the
14 ability to cope with the problem. They would show photos of
15 burned people, and homes, and talk very firmly to them. In
16 other words, try to frighten the child into the consequence
17 of his actions, maybe even intimidate him with threats of
18 punishment, jail, and spanking from parents.

19 Then if he promised not to set any more fires, they
20 let him sit on the shiny red fire truck, and maybe blow the
21 siren for him. Some firefighters believed that the curious
22 firesetters could be turned around by letting him set fires
23 until he became just plain bored. In other words, send him
24 home, give him a box of good old cowboy, or kitchen matches,
25 and let him light them one-by-one and extinguish them slowly,
26 and maybe it would teach him never to play with fire again.

27 As effective as these measures may seemingly have
28 been, obviously, they were not. The problem was increasing,

1 and nobody was specifically addressing it.

2 In 1975, Captain Joe Day, head of our department's
3 education unit, served on a panel with other fire officials
4 and two psychologists at the California State Psychologist
5 Association in Anaheim. As an outgrowth of that conference,
6 an Arson Prevention Committee was formed.

7 The committee identified with the fire service as
8 doing interviews with juvenile firesetters, but there was
9 little, if any training available through the fire community
10 on how to conduct a meaningful interview, and identify those
11 needed more in-depth professional counseling.

12 In 1977, our department received a grant from the
13 Fire Administration to develop a training manual to aid fire
14 department personnel in identifying and counseling youthful
15 firesetters. This initial manual, as mentioned before, was
16 targeted at the group of age seven and below.

17 We also held workshops to include both fire service
18 personnel and psychologists who are interested in working with
19 juvenile firesetters. This first workshop was held in 1978.
20 A subsequent grant developed video training programs on the
21 same subject.

22 In 1980, and this is where the work began to spread
23 on a national basis, on a cooperative agreement with the Fire
24 Administration, and the Psychologist Association, workshops,
25 75 in number, were conducted in 28 states, and Captain Joe Day
26 was a project coordinator of that project.

27 Many departments showed great interest. Our depart-
28 ment included juvenile counseling as part of the in-service

1 training, and all personnel received instruction in counseling
2 techniques. We had to recognize and realize that firefighters
3 are not psychologists. What we want the firefighter to do is
4 to recognize the problem, and be able to make the appropriate
5 referral.

6 Since 1980, our fire department has counseled more
7 than 200 youngsters that have been identified with these
8 problems. They've been referred to us by schools, by fire
9 station personnel, and by -- who felt that our staff of
10 educators in our fire education unit were more suited to
11 handling this particular problem.

12 Despite the fact that little publicity has been given
13 to the availability of this program, we do find parents who
14 seek our help. Follow-up is difficult. If the youngster is
15 referred to a professional counseling, we lose contact as the
16 patient/psychologist relationship begins, but we are satisfied
17 and convinced that goals that we can follow, there have been
18 less than 3 percent repeat fire problems. Our program is
19 therefore effective, as we now see it.

20 I would like to, however, add a different perspective
21 to the overall problem, one that is -- I feel is certainly more
22 proactive, and that is the prevention of this problem to
23 begin with. That is in public education.

24 Starting in 1960, our department created and
25 identified a public education unit to work with schools. It
26 focused on the fifth grade in approximately 300 elementary
27 schools. In 1972, we modified the program to encompass the
28 second, third, and fourth grades. We were convinced with

1 discussions with professional educators that second graders
2 were indeed capable of learning that fires can be dangerous,
3 and they were excellent carriers of that information back into
4 their own homes and families.

5 A study by graduate school researchers revealed
6 that in the five years, after changing our emphasis from the
7 single fifth grade approach to encompassing all the grades
8 previously mentioned, that fire starts by children had dropped
9 by approximately 80 percent.

10 We conclude that the exposure of these children to
11 the fire problems serves as a deterrent to starting fires, and
12 I might give emphasis to what that program means in our
13 jurisdiction. In the calendar year of 1982, working in 401
14 schools, we conducted 1,333 programs with an attendance of
15 approximately 156,000 students.

16 SENATOR DAVIS: You do the whole -- excuse me, do
17 you do the whole school at one time? When you go into an
18 elementary school, do you take grades one through three, and
19 then four through six, or how do you do it?

20 CHIEF BRAGDON: No, sir, they're done in their
21 normal classroom setting.

22 SENATOR DAVIS: Individual classrooms?

23 CHIEF BRAGDON: Yes.

24 If I had to make a recommendation to the fire
25 community, of those who are not currently involved in such a
26 public education program, it would be involvement. That is
27 your commitment and investment in the future, those young
28 people, and I think I could expand upon that comment considerably.

1 It does not represent much of a financial investment;
2 it is your investment in the future. Our budget, approximately
3 two-tenths of one percent are dedicated to that effort, and
4 yet we are able to reach the numbers of people that I indicated
5 earlier.

6 I'm appalled at times, when I find that during recent
7 years when there have been financing difficulties to some
8 extent in local government, that people would not still maintain
9 their public education and commitment as the highest priority,
10 and somehow those programs have been dropped.

11 To conclude, I can state that firefighters properly
12 trained can provide a resource for counseling juvenile fire-
13 setters. Most psychologists do not understand the juvenile
14 firesetter and the problem. Proper training in their role
15 in helping to work with these youngsters and their families
16 is also vitally needed.

17 There are insufficient resources within the public
18 sector to provide professional mental health counseling with
19 the juvenile firesetter and family. In Los Angeles County we
20 have the resources of one mental health professional, and
21 she divides her time between firesetters and other patients.

22 Social workers must also have knowledge of the
23 firesetter problem, and be equipped with information as to
24 where help can be obtained. Many of the youngsters that we
25 see are already receiving some form of counseling from the
26 public sector for other social and family problems.

27 Additional fire safety education programs must be
28 developed and delivered to the preschooler. An early

1 appreciation of fire in our lifestyle does not deter youngsters
2 from playing with fire. Priority must be given to funding
3 educational programs for teachers and preschool leaders to
4 permit them to identify a problem youngster.

5 Of the millions of dollars expended annually by the
6 federal, state, county, city governments to meet the challenge
7 of mental health problems, none currently is earmarked for
8 continued development of professional programs to tackle the
9 problem of the juvenile firesetter.

10 Without that help, without a concerted effort, we
11 will continue to have fires which destroy our homes, damage
12 property, and burn, maim, and kill. With youngsters, it is
13 often the firesetter himself who becomes the victim. I might
14 add to that, as I mentioned before, we need a stronger
15 interface in our other public sectors, community law enforcement
16 and so forth to identify and work with this problem.

17 If I can leave one recommendation for this Committee,
18 it would be to expand beyond just the fire problem, but into
19 those that exist in all of our communities. We have forgotten
20 in our educational system some of the civic responsibilities
21 that should be firmly ingrained at the most impressionable
22 age -- I'm talking about obedience to law, preparation for
23 emergency and disaster services, as well as the fire problem
24 we just addressed.

25 That is something I think that this Committee could
26 address through the educational mandates in this state. Thank
27 you.

28 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you. Senator Davis, any

1 questions?

2 SENATOR DAVIS: Chief Bragdon, I apologize for
3 having had to go out and return some calls to the press, but
4 you understand that very well, I'm sure. But -- so I missed
5 whether or not your department actively has adopted the
6 Firehawk Program.

7 CHIEF BRAGDON: Yes, we are an affiliate, or I am
8 a member of the Firehawk Board, and so forth, but we've been
9 involved in the Juvenile Firesetter Program since its inception.

10 SENATOR DAVIS: Now, when you talked about having
11 your -- I presume, arson investigators, or maybe firemen go
12 to schools, the second grade, or whatever it is, did you
13 indicate that was cutoff as a result of probably Prop. 13, or
14 are you still doing that?

15 CHIEF BRAGDON: No, sir. What I did indicate, even
16 with the funding difficulties, that I am appalled that any
17 responsible fire official would not still establish that as
18 his top priority, public education, particularly in our school
19 system at that impressionable age, grades two through five,
20 and that should always be his top priority, that's his
21 investment in the future.

22 SENATOR DAVIS: But you are -- you have been able to
23 continue to do that?

24 CHIEF BRAGDON: Yes, we have continued that, yes.

25 SENATOR DAVIS: But you feel some frustration that
26 not every chief sees the efficacy of it, and I just want to
27 tell you, I share that. I invented Neighborhood Watch, and it
28 was highly effective in reducing crime. It was very difficult

1 to get policemen, particularly -- even my own department, I
2 was able to command that, you know, and tuned it up once a
3 week myself, but to propagate it around the nation, it's still
4 being tried here and there, and hither and yon, but without
5 really putting into it all the things that really make it work.

6 So, I have shared the frustration you feel about not
7 everyone universally doing this job with children in the school.
8 I agree with you 100 percent.

9 CHIEF BRAGDON: Your comments are, in fact, analogous,
10 and I would hope that through organizations such as these
11 professional organizations, the federal focus that's been
12 presented, and this growing emphasis in addressing the problem
13 by the U.S. Fire Administration that we will, in fact,
14 accomplish those things that you also realize some frustration.

15 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Chief.
16 Our next witness will be the State Fire Marhsal, Chief Ron
17 Bogardus. Chief Bogardus?

18 CHIEF BOGARDUS: Senator Davis, Senator Campbell,
19 as you're aware, I'm very intense about the subject of arson,
20 and I commend your initiative in addressing what I believe is
21 the most promising long-term solution to reducing the arson
22 problem in California, and that is dealing effectively with
23 the juvenile firesetter.

24 For the sake of emphasis, I will confine my comments
25 to the principal subject areas of: the need for statistical
26 data, and the need for increased public education to reduce
27 the incidents of juvenile firesetting.

28 We all recognize how important accurate, and complete

1 information is to the problem solving process. Valid and
2 reliable data is not only essential to such basic tasks as
3 properly identifying the problem, but it's equally important
4 to measuring and evaluating the results, and attempt solutions.
5 In the case of juvenile firesetters, this critically needed
6 data is lacking in California.

7 The California Fire Incident Reporting System,
8 administered by the office of the State Fire Marshal, is one
9 of the most comprehensive fire data systems in the country
10 today; yet, the only information we gather relative to this
11 issue is whether a juvenile was or was not involved in an
12 arson incident. To my knowledge, we are the only state that
13 collects even that basic information.

14 Although detail -- although sufficient detail in the
15 CFIRS system data base does give some measure of scope to the
16 problem; for instance, during the past five years, through
17 December 1982, juveniles were identified in 48,500 arson fires,
18 which resulted in \$131 million in damaged and destroyed
19 property. That represents 38 percent of all arson fires, and
20 29 percent of the total dollar loss attributed to arson in
21 California during that period.

22 When we consider just structure fires, and those are
23 the ones that people are most likely at risk, we find that
24 36 percent of the arson fires, and 30 percent of the dollar
25 loss are juvenile related. Furthermore, if we were to add
26 those incidents reported as suspicious, the total arson
27 activity involving juveniles would leap to 101,000 fires, and
28 \$204 million in loss -- a staggering loss, certainly

1 unacceptable to our business community and the economy of our
2 state.

3 For the record, I have included annual summaries of
4 this data as my attachment to my testimony. I will also
5 gladly provide any further analysis of the data that the
6 Committee would find helpful.

7 This basic information certainly helps to quantify
8 the general scope of the problem, but unfortunately, it stops
9 there. In order to properly address the problem, we must have
10 more information about the individuals involved -- who they
11 are, how old are they, what's their background, where they
12 live, their education, their family situation, are they
13 involved in problems other than firesetting.

14 In other words, we must have a clear understanding
15 of what factors contribute to firesetting behavior so that
16 intervention efforts can be focused accordingly. The obvious
17 question is, how do we obtain this essential information?

18 Although I do not have a definitive proposal to
19 present at this time, I do offer the services of the office of
20 the State Fire Marshal to develop an extension of the reporting
21 system that will capture those elements of data needed to
22 identify the firesetting problem, and make them available
23 through the California Fire Incident Reporting System.

24 I'm confident that a practical and effective process
25 can be put in place for a relatively small cost. I will be
26 happy to work with your staff, and other interested parties to
27 develop the detailed plan for your consideration.

28 One of the most significant benefits to be derived

1 from this data will be its use to raise awareness of the
2 problem and increase the efforts towards public education.

3 The unique behavior problems associated with young
4 firesetters cannot be solved by fire and law enforcement
5 officials alone. Parents, teachers, coaches, youth group
6 leaders, neighbors, the entire community must be sensitized
7 to the problem if positive changes are to result.

8 People must understand that when a child deliberately
9 sets a fire, it's most likely a manifestation of a deep
10 emotional problem. Public education is needed to dispell the
11 long-held misconception that we are protecting a child by
12 ignoring or hiding the fact that he or she exhibits fire-
13 setting behavior, and nothing more could be further from the
14 truth.

15 These young people need help, and the sooner they
16 receive it in their lives, the better. That help is now
17 available in the form of a professionally directed counseling
18 program such as the outstandingly successful Firehawk Program
19 founded in San Francisco by Pam McLaughlin. I'd also like
20 to mention the All Teen Arson Council founded in Los Angeles
21 by Chief Manning and Mr. Pressman that are present here this
22 morning.

23 People need to understand the importance of
24 recognizing the underlying factors evidenced in firesetting
25 behavior, and the critical necessity for obtaining profession-
26 ally guided help to modify that behavior.

27 A specifically focused data collection process, and
28 an intense community oriented public education effort are

1 essential to bring that about.

2 I'd like to thank you, both Senators, for listening
3 to the California Fire Service, for being interested in this
4 process, and I'd certainly be glad to answer any questions.

5 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Ed?

6 SENATOR DAVIS: Well, again, back to Ms. McLaughlin's
7 original testimony, she regretted that there wasn't a more
8 comprehensive massaging of whatever data could be gathered
9 so that it would help in terms of prevention, and I have to
10 agree with her, and I reflect back on -- and I did when I was
11 in the business, on police reports. They're designed to get
12 the data in case this fellow does it again, that you'll know
13 who he was, and in the process of trying to convict, that you
14 have the data necessary to do that.

15 In terms of all the other kinds of data that would
16 be useful to people working in the field of prevention, the
17 kind of information that -- the Glicks who did the massive,
18 ponderous opuses on -- research on delinquency, and they were
19 very useful to all of us, that -- you know, you have a single
20 parent family, and you have a certain economic level, and you
21 have certain other conditions, none of that is reflected in
22 police arrest reports, and I doubt very much that the fire
23 service, in terms of their arrests, handled by their arson
24 people, have gathered that.

25 In the case of the police, when I brought that up,
26 because of the vast volume of arrests that are made, people
27 say, well, we couldn't get to that. But I -- the fire service
28 has a -- miniscule in numbers, numbers of arrests to process,

1 and particularly with juveniles.

2 It might well be that some of you in your profession
3 could think about asking yourself if Elmer and Sheldon Glick
4 were trying to help on this problem. You know what kinds of
5 other data would they try to find out about a youth who had
6 been identified as being a perpetrator in arson.

7 There's a possibility that you could pioneer, and go
8 ahead with the police field, and come up with some useful
9 things that would help them in working against delinquency.

10 CHIEF BOGARDUS: Senator, it's our feeling that with
11 minor modification to the form that's filled out on all fires
12 in the State of California and reported to the State Fire
13 Marshal's Office, that a minor modification could be made for
14 a test period to run one year or more, which would develop
15 the data, and with the strong support of the -- of my
16 colleagues here in the room, we could see that the data a
17 year from now was much more comprehensive than it is today,
18 and put some limits on this problem so we can address it in
19 real terms.

20 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: What is required, Chief, to
21 change your reporting system?

22 CHIEF BOGARDUS: It's our feeling today, Senator,
23 that --

24 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Is that an internal document that
25 you have?

26 CHIEF BOGARDUS: Well, it's an internal process that
27 emanates from the State Fire Marshal's Office, but it includes
28 every fire in the state, and each individual fire has its own

1 individual report that's made out at the local level. That
2 form is provided by the state. We feel that we can modify
3 that form, basically, that's a contract with Teale Data Center
4 where that's all entered, coming out monthly to our office,
5 published annually.

6 That process is not inexpensive, but it's not
7 prohibitive either.

8 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you, Chief. I appreciate
9 your being here today.

10 CHIEF BOGARDUS: Thank you very much.

11 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Our next witness will be Chief
12 Donald Manning from the Los Angeles City Fire Department.
13 Chief Manning?

14 CHIEF MANNING: Senator Campbell, Senator Davis,
15 ladies and gentlemen, I really thank you for the opportunity
16 to be here.

17 During the past three years, there were 81,640 fire
18 incidents in the City of Los Angeles. Twelve and a half
19 percent, or 10,249 of those fires were directly related to
20 juveniles. Of these juvenile related fires, 6.4 percent, or
21 5,256 of these fires were caused by juveniles playing with
22 matches.

23 The cause for the remaining 6.1 percent, or 4,993
24 fires was listed as juvenile incendiary or juvenile suspicious
25 fires.

26 In listing a fire as being juvenile incendiary or
27 suspicious, we are referring to the juvenile whose motive is
28 spite, vandalism, malicious mischief, crime cover, or who is

1 a pyromaniac or psychotic.

2 In listing a fire as being juvenile with matches,
3 we are referring to the child who is playing with, or
4 experimenting with matches and unintentionally starts a fire.

5 During the same three year period, the associated
6 direct fire loss for total fires was \$267.2 million. 4.3
7 percent of this total loss, or \$11.6 million was attributed
8 to juvenile caused fires. Half of this juvenile caused loss,
9 or \$5.8 million was attributed to juveniles playing with
10 matches, and the other \$5.8 million was attributed to juvenile
11 incendiary or suspicious fires.

12 Additionally, these juvenile related fires have
13 caused a conservatively estimated indirect fire loss of \$46.4
14 million, or an average loss of \$42,375 per day. Indirect loss
15 refers to the loss of jobs, medical care cost, increased
16 insurance premiums, increased welfare or financial burdens
17 placed on the community and its citizens as a result of the
18 fire. That's \$42,375 a day.

19 Further, these juvenile related fires have caused
20 an incalculable amount of suffering and personal trauma. During
21 the past three years, there has been 254 fire fatalities in
22 the City of Los Angeles. Of these 3.1 percent, or eight of the
23 fatalities occurred from juvenile caused fires. All eight
24 fatalities were listed as caused by juveniles playing with
25 matches.

26 In reviewing our data base and comparing fiscal
27 year statistics for the last three years, it has been noted
28 that there has been a decrease in the number of juvenile

1 incendiary and suspicious fires, while there has been an
2 increase in juvenile playing with matches fires.

3 Statistics such as those stated above enable an
4 agency such as ours to: (1) Identify a developing trend, or
5 the extent of the problem over a period of time, and (2) to
6 determine where resources, often rather limited, should be
7 deployed.

8 To this end, the Los Angeles Fire Department has
9 been committed for some time to thoroughly identifying its
10 arson problem by the accurate reporting of fires and careful
11 cause determination.

12 In dealing with the juvenile fire problem, the
13 Department has been active in several areas. It has an
14 ongoing program of teaching fire prevention to fifth graders,
15 school visitation and demonstrations, distribution of anti-
16 fireworks literature to the schools and the community prior
17 to the 4th of July, and conducting fire prevention sweeps in
18 the immediate neighborhood where a fire has occurred.

19 The Department has also been very active in the
20 Mayor's Arson Task Force where a unique juvenile program
21 called ATAC, All Teen Arson Council, was developed to prevent
22 arson in the schools and the community.

23 I would like at this time to introduce Mr. Jerrold
24 Pressman, Chairman of the All Teen Arson Council. Mr. Pressman,
25 a member of the Mayor's Arson Task Force is the President of
26 Master Fire Protection Enterprises, one of the largest fire
27 protection companies in the United States. He has been very
28 active in the field of fire prevention education, and is a

1 member of several committees at Cal State University, Los
2 Angeles, and is on the Board of Visitor's of the United States
3 Fire Academy, Emmitsburg, Maryland.

4 I'd like to make Mr. Pressman to make a presentation
5 to the board as part of mine.

6 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Certainly, Mr. Pressman?

7 MR. PRESSMAN: Thank you. It's indeed a pleasure to
8 be here today. In 1979, the City of Los Angeles addressed
9 itself to several factors, one of which was statistical, two
10 and three-quarter billion dollars worth of losses -- well, I
11 don't even want to get into statistics. Let me get more down
12 to brass tacks.

13 The uniqueness that we face, the real crime of arson
14 is a crime that is borne by our society for not having a cogent
15 plan to deliver to our children. We haven't done a good job,
16 and the ATAC Program was designed to pick up that load by
17 transferring the burden to the children. Since we haven't been
18 able to teach them, we thought perhaps the kids could teach
19 us something, and that's exactly what the program did.

20 We got around the red tape by going to the private
21 sector and having them totally fund the program. The scope of
22 the project was to bring an awareness to all students of the
23 major financial impact, and the extreme life hazard to them-
24 selves and their loved ones that is created by the crime of
25 arson and fire vandalism.

26 The concept involved working with the schools, the
27 parents, the youth of our community in different ways than have
28 been tried before. It was designed to be acceptable by the

1 business community who was going to be asked to fund the
2 program. I'd like to read to you some of the goals on our
3 original outline of the program.

4 It was to incorporate a fire prevention and fire
5 awareness into the daily habits of our youth. Again, something
6 that very few places in the country have addressed themselves
7 to.

8 To present a standard for fire safe living to our
9 youth in the formative years. We're so busy giving them the
10 statistics, we're so busy covering the major issues that we
11 haven't addressed ourselves to the simple problem of getting
12 down and teaching our youth from the youngest age what fire
13 safety is all about.

14 To impart fire prevention techniques and skills that
15 will be applicable over the life of the student.

16 To create peer awareness, thereby eliminating any
17 peer rewards that firesetting may have generated in the past.

18 To place the feeling of responsibility for fire
19 vandalism at the most effective level, and that's with the
20 kids that are doing it.

21 To provide all Los Angeles youth with a personal
22 link to law enforcement for the specific purpose of identifying
23 those observed, or known to be participating in firesetting
24 or fire vandalism.

25 To include the use of a hot line which would provide
26 our youth direct access to reporting individuals or suspicious
27 circumstances to the proper authorities anonymously, and to
28 act as an ongoing deterrent.

1 Again, most important, to use the youth of our city
2 to fill that educational void that our society has failed to
3 provide in the areas of arson awareness, and carrying the
4 message to their homes.

5 Now, we did this by creating a competitive environ-
6 ment in the schools, by having them demonstrate fire
7 extinguishing skills, to teach the kids to do the fire
8 inspections in the schools, and to make the teachers aware
9 that the extinguishers were gone, that the alarm was turned off,
10 that the doors were locked.

11 The interesting part of the program is that we have
12 week tip posters placed up. We supplied thousands of
13 additional posters to be replaced, expecting them to be torn
14 down on a weekly basis. To this date, we have not replaced
15 one poster in one school.

16 The Burbank Junior High School, where the program
17 began initially had one fire a day, attributed to somebody
18 throwing a match somewhere. Since this program was incepted,
19 we have not had one fire a day.

20 Now, all of the assignments, which are part of my
21 presentation, are available for your use. I would encourage
22 you to read them. What they really do is have the children
23 go into the schools, go down to the grade school level, go
24 into their community, to the YMCA, and tell the story from a
25 child's point of view, and to give us the things that we've
26 been missing.

27 I've toured the United States and the world, and have
28 talked to fire educators throughout our great nation, and

1 unfortunately, that's what it comes down to, talk, nothing but
2 rhetoric, nothing but inaction, so I certainly welcome the
3 efforts made by this Committee, and I hope we can get beyond
4 that talking stage.

5 Let me just tell you the way we end our year. Most
6 of the children are taken to a burn ward. Now, the purpose is
7 not to expose these kids to terribly disfigured burn victims,
8 but it's to let them see what the impact of that match can
9 perform. All the statistics in the world could not be worth
10 the looks on their faces when they see other children that
11 have been burned, and to get that message back to that family.

12 How many kids are burned blowing out their birthday
13 candles? How many kids are burned through hot water? How
14 many kids are burned through stupidity, stupidity of adults?
15 I think we have a viable program, and I think the City of
16 Los Angeles is performing a very vital function.

17 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Pressman. Chief?

18 CHIEF MANNING: Yes, sir. The Department has also
19 been active in counseling the juvenile firesetter who has
20 maliciously set a fire. The juvenile may be counseled at a
21 fire station, or arrested and sited back to the Los Angeles
22 City Fire Department Arson Unit, or a police station near his
23 home to appear with his parents, or may be referred to
24 Dr. Linda E. Weinberger, a consultant to the Los Angeles City
25 Fire Department.

26 I would like at this time to introduce Dr. Weinberger,
27 who is the chief psychologist at the USC Institute of Psychiatry,
28 Law and Behavioral Sciences. Dr. Weinberger has taught at the

1 University of Houston, and USC, and has conducted research on
2 the psychological dimensions of juvenile firesetters.

3 Dr. Weinberger holds a B.A., an M.A. in Psychology, and a
4 Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. Dr. Weinberger.

5 DR. WEINBERGER: Good morning Honorable Chairman,
6 Senator Davis, ladies and gentlemen.

7 In an attempt to understand the numerous psychological
8 dimensions related to firesetting behavior among juveniles, a
9 review of the literature was conducted at the USC Institute
10 of Psychiatry, Law and Behavior Science by the late Seymour
11 Pollack and his associates, myself included.

12 It was found that this broad category of youth who
13 engaged in firesetting conducted could be subdivided into two
14 sections: those youngsters who intentionally set fires, and
15 those youngsters who do so nonintentionally. In exploring the
16 latter, children who play with matches as a result of
17 curiosity, experimentation, or fascination seldom intend to
18 set fire to anything or anyone.

19 Similarly, any other type of behavior where a
20 youngster's curiosity or negligence leads to a dangerous fire
21 situation may be classified as nonintentional firesetting.

22 Mental health professionals have worked with youth
23 who display such interest or negligence primarily via
24 instructional or educational means. That is, these young
25 people may be given pamphlets to read, or movies to see about
26 the hazards of fire; or they may be asked to make posters or
27 complete homework assignments related to fire safety; or they
28 may visit fire stations and be exposed to the workings of

1 firefighters.

2 The nonintentional firesetter is certainly a concern
3 to us all. The fire that results from his or her behavior
4 may be just as damaging as a fire set intentionally. However,
5 we believe that it is the juvenile who sets fires intentionally
6 who represents a more potential harm and appears more alarming
7 to the community.

8 In describing individuals who set fires intentionally,
9 we may further subdivide this category of people into two
10 sections: those who set fires for pathological reasons and
11 those who set fires for nonpathological reasons. To illustrate
12 people who set fire as a result of a nonpathological motive,
13 we may consider the person who sets a fire in order to destroy
14 or conceal evidence from another crime, or we may consider the
15 torch, a person who sets fires for financial profit.

16 Generally, juvenile firesetters seldom fall into
17 this category, particularly children. However, I have evaluated
18 a teenager who intentionally set a fire in order to destroy
19 evidence and divert attention from his burgling activities.

20 As I mentioned earlier, we as a community, and more
21 specifically, those in the mental health professions, are most
22 concerned about the juvenile who intentionally sets a fire
23 because of a pathological reason. We fear that if such an
24 individual is not treated, his or her psychopathology will
25 remain in tact and active as well as serve as a predisposing
26 factor for additional acting out behavior.

27 Among youngsters, it is imperative that we consider
28 what is viewed as age-appropriate conduct in order to

1 distinguish pathological behavior from nonpathological behavior.
2 In addition, a consideration of the youngster's emotions and
3 his or her motives for setting the fire must be made so that
4 an accurate distinction can be rendered.

5 For example, among young children who set fires,
6 let's say between the ages of two and seven, as discussed
7 earlier, curiosity and fascination with fire as well as
8 excitement and enjoyment derived from fire engines and fire
9 extinguishing, does not in and of itself point to psycho-
10 pathology. Such emotions and motives are normal.

11 In addition, such children are highly responsive to
12 curtailing such behavior after they've been warned or
13 reprimanded about the dangerous elements inherent with fire.
14 Similarly, as children grow older, one of the most common
15 features present and causally related to their firesetting
16 behavior is conflicts between them and their parents.

17 Aggressiveness, jealousy, talking back, moodiness,
18 temper tantrums, and withdrawal are some traits and features
19 frequently found among prepubescent juveniles. They too are
20 generally amenable to simple counseling efforts.

21 The child, however, who continues to set fires after
22 experiencing parental authority, or counseling intervention,
23 most frequently is one who is doing so because of pathological
24 reasons.

25 Among children between the ages of let's say, seven
26 and twelve, who are not mentally retarded, or suffering from
27 significant psychopathology, such as mental retardation,
28 psychosis, autism, the most common causal feature related to

1 their firesetting behavior is that of seriously disturbed
2 child/parent relationships. The youngster's firesetting
3 behavior is a manifestation of his emotional experience in such
4 a relationship.

5 What the children experience in almost all of these
6 seriously disturbed relationships is a feeling of rejection,
7 abandonment, or deprivation of love and security over a long
8 period of time. The child may have suffered abuse, be it
9 verbal or physical, neglect, inconsistency in discipline and
10 setting of limits, or parental separation, such as that from
11 divorce, death, remarriage, birth of a sibling.

12 The child's firesetting behavior may be viewed as
13 an aggressive act where he can indirectly express his hostile
14 impulses about having been rejected or abandoned. It can also
15 be hypothesized that the firesetting behavior is a means by
16 which he can attract attention to himself and not feel rejected
17 or overlooked.

18 Attention, irrespective of whether it is dispensed
19 in a positive or negative manner, nevertheless, represents to
20 the child notice, and thus, supersedes his rejection, at least
21 for that moment in time. His firesetting behavior, thus, is
22 in essence, a cry for help.

23 Youngsters who feel significantly inferior or
24 inadequate, and have low self-esteem may attempt to compensate
25 for such feelings by engaging in a behavior that would make
26 them appear as a hero. That is, they may intentionally set
27 fires and then attract attention to themselves by allegedly
28 finding and reporting the fire.

1 Consequently, they may feel powerful and prestigious.
2 Most of these youngsters tend to be preadolescents with low
3 intelligence and/or suffering from learning disabilities.
4 Among youngsters who are in direct conflict with an authority
5 figure, firesetting behavior can serve as a means by which
6 the juvenile can show himself superior and powerful to his
7 adult oppressor.

8 We have found that juveniles who set fires alone are
9 more likely to be psychologically disturbed than those who
10 engaged in this conduct with others. Peer pressure, the thrill
11 of the moment, or initiation activity may serve as nonpatho-
12 logical motivating factors. Fires set as a part of group
13 conduct occur more frequently among teenagers between the
14 ages of 12 and 16.

15 This type of behavior may be reflective of a general
16 pattern of developing delinquency. Often, this set of juveniles
17 start fires as a result of strong feelings of revenge and the
18 desire for retaliation against an authority figure. School
19 fires are a good example.

20 We do not believe that their conduct is a manifesta-
21 tion of severe psychopathology, or deep seated emotional
22 problems; rather, it appears to be a reflection of antisocial
23 attitudes and values. Such juveniles are often psychiatrically
24 diagnosed as having a conduct disorder.

25 The juvenile with a conduct disorder is one who
26 demonstrates a repetitive and persistent pattern of antisocial
27 behavior whereby the rights of others are violated.

28 Children and adolescents who have a conduct disorder

1 and demonstrate it aggressively, such as by setting fires, may
2 be classified as being undersocialized or socialized -- the
3 difference being that the undersocialized juvenile has not
4 established adequate social bonds, while the socialized
5 juvenile has done so.

6 It has been found that the undersocialized firesetter
7 is frequently more emotionally disturbed than the socialized
8 one. The undersocialized firesetter tends to be a loner and
9 acts out as an expression of anger, hostility, jealousy,
10 defiance, or revenge against others.

11 The socialized firesetter, on the other hand, has
12 social attachments and usually engages in firesetting behavior
13 with others. This type of youth acts out because of disregard
14 or callousness toward others for whom they feel no attachment.
15 Such an individual is usually a few years older, pubertal or
16 immediately post-pubertal, than the undersocialized firesetter
17 who tends to fall into the pre-pubertal stage.

18 The older delinquent teenager who sets fires is
19 usually doing so because of more clearly defined and
20 entrenched antisocial values. They're commonly involved in
21 gang activities, or the fire is used to cover up other illegal
22 behavior. The reaction to their consequences of conduct is
23 similar to that of individuals with an antisocial personality
24 disorder, in that they appear remorseless and free of guilt.

25 There is also a group of juveniles who set fires
26 because of disorders of impulse control, namely, the pyromaniac.
27 True pyromania manifests itself during childhood. Psychiatric
28 diagnostic criteria for this disorder consists of the following:

1 a recurrent failure to resist impulses to set fires; an
2 increasing sense of tension before setting the fire; an
3 experience of either intense pleasure, gratification, or
4 release at the time of committing the act; and a lack of
5 motivation for setting the fire, such as monetary gain, or
6 sociopolitical ideology.

7 Some people who suffer from pyromania have reported
8 experiencing sexual arousal from fire. Those individuals who
9 engage in the greatest percentage of repeated firesetting
10 tend to be male adolescents between 16 and 18 years of age.
11 They're often psychosocially and psychosexually immature.
12 They are usually introverted, loners, noncompetitive, and
13 ineffective.

14 In addition, they have had few or no heterosexual
15 experiences and avoid such relationships. Most of them have
16 mildly defective intelligence, but are not as retarded in their
17 ability to function day-to-day in society. It appears that
18 emotional or social rejection is the causal factor for their
19 firesetting behavior.

T.3 20 In most of my presentation, I used the male pronoun
21 when describing juvenile firesetters, this was intentional.
22 Research findings indicate --

23 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Not chauvinistic, just intentional.

24 DR. WEINBERGER: Research findings indicate that
25 firesetting differs from other types of delinquent behavior
26 in that it appears to be a predominantly male activity. We're
27 unsure as to the reasons why males as opposed to females are
28 more prone to engage in this type of conduct for expressing

1 hostile impulses.

2 In conclusion, it is important to keep in mind that
3 juveniles who suffer from psychopathology or significant
4 psychological problems do not only manifest their difficulties
5 by setting fires. Juveniles who set fires generally do not
6 know, or are unable to explain the reasons for their behavior.
7 In addition, their parents tend to express similar confusion
8 and often minimize the significance of their child's conduct.

9 As a result, it is incumbent upon firefighters as
10 well as mental health professionals to develop and perfect our
11 diagnostic skills so that we may be able to recognize and
12 distinguish among the different subtypes of juvenile fire-
13 setters and thereby administer appropriate intervention.

14 In attempting to understand the dynamics and features
15 which lead juveniles to engage in firesetting behavior, one
16 day soon, hopefully, we will be able to move away from a
17 remedial model of intervention to a preventive model.

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Doctor.
20 I appreciate your testimony. Chief?

21 CHIEF MANNING: Senator Campbell, in closing I
22 again would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity
23 to appear before you and to bring the two people with me. We
24 really appreciate this opportunity. If there are any questions
25 I may --

26 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: We appreciate your testimony here
27 today, Chief. Thank you very kindly.

28 Our next witness will be Dr. Jessica Gaynor who

1 obviously doesn't have an audio/visual certificate, but is a
2 licensed psychologist in the State of California.

3 DR. GAYNOR: I'm going to use another audio/visual
4 piece of equipment, which I hope works better this time.

5 I'd like to start by thanking the Committee for
6 giving me the opportunity to address the issue of child
7 firesetting. I think it's very important that many different
8 professionals can work together to describe the problem of
9 child firesetting and offer a diversity of solutions.

10 Today I'd like to focus on who these child fire-
11 setters are, and why they need our help, and what is available
12 to help them.

13 Curiosity about fire is a naturally occurring
14 phenomenon. We all can claim, at least an interest in fire.
15 Like most natural occurrences, however, fire has both its
16 positive and negative features. The question we must ask
17 ourselves today is why is it that during an early phase of our
18 development where our interest in fire can be extended into a
19 destructive and potentially deadly act? Why do children
20 become involved in firesetting? Who are they and how can we
21 help them? Why do children become involved?

22 Fire interest is universal. There is virtually no
23 culture where fire has not played a major role. Interest in
24 fire reportedly begins as early as the age of three. Even at
25 this early age, fire interest often turns into fireplay.
26 Fireplay in children usually begins when they light matches
27 with or without parental permission or supervision.

28 Data estimates that up to 50 percent, or half of all

1 children actually participate in fireplay. If half of all our
2 youngsters actually strike a match or engage in some sort of
3 minor fireplay, either in a supervised or unsupervised setting,
4 then it's not hard to imagine the great potential for fires to
5 occur simply as a result of innocent fireplay.

6 Data estimate that in most cases where children have
7 been involved in one instance of fireplay, 33 percent of those
8 fireplay instances resulted in a fire. In addition, for those
9 children who have been involved in more than one fireplay
10 incident, 80 percent of the time their fireplay resulted in
11 actual fires.

12 Where the majority of these fires are small and
13 easily extinguished, their severity in part depends on such
14 chance conditions as the place where the fire was started, the
15 type of material used, the weather, et cetera. Remember, these
16 statistics only reflect the incidence of fires set amongst
17 those youngsters who are involved in casual fireplay. And,
18 these statistics reflect those fires which were actually
19 brought to someone's attention.

20 If the incidence of fireplay in children remains high,
21 then the probability of fireplay resulting in actual fires,
22 some of which may be costly and damaging, also remains high.

23 Up to this point, I have described a universal
24 interest in fire which, at a very early age for many children,
25 translates into fireplay. We are talking about "normal"
26 children. Their fireplay behavior was a result of a naturally
27 occurring interest in fire. They wanted to know how fire feels
28 and looks, how hot it is, how it burns, and what it does.

1 So, part of the answer to why children become involved
2 in firesetting is that their involvement arises out of a
3 naturally occurring curiosity about fire. In fact, statistics
4 show that about 60 percent of children involved in known fire-
5 setting incidents can be classified as "curiosity" firesetters.

6 But what about the other 40 percent? This group of
7 children is not involved in casual fireplay. Their casual
8 fireplay turns into repeated firesetting incidents. Who are
9 these children, and why has their casual fireplay resulted in
10 more serious firesetting behavior?

11 Who are the child firesetters? We know that 60
12 percent of the children involved in firesetting can be
13 described as curious and as wanting to explore or experiment
14 with their environment through fire. Often the fires started
15 by these children are accidental. We classify these children as
16 at little risk for future involvement in firesetting.

17 Once these children have started a fire, they usually
18 seek help from an adult to extinguish it. They often admit
19 their involvement and feel guilt and remorse concerning their
20 behavior. You will often hear them say that they don't want
21 to play with matches any more, that they have learned their
22 lesson, and they didn't realize that playing with matches
23 could start fires.

24 These children have normal physical abilities, normal
25 intelligence, personality and social behaviors. They come
26 from relatively stable families and have little or no difficulty
27 in school. However, for other children, fireplay is not an
28 isolated problem, but rather a part of a series of behavior and

1 situational problems. These children are involved in recurrent
2 firesetting as an expression of underlying needs or problems
3 in their lives.

4 Before I describe the psychology of the recurrent
5 firesetter, it might be useful to present the widely used
6 framework for classifying child firesetters. This was
7 developed by Captain Joe Day, who is present here today, of
8 the Los Angeles Fire Department and Dr. Kenneth Fineman, under
9 the direction of the United States Fire Administration.

10 It classifies child firesetting behavior along a
11 continuum of severity, specifying three major categories of
12 risk. A risk level describes how likely it is that a child
13 will become involved in future firesetting, given his psycho-
14 logical and firesetting history.

15 (Slide presentation.)

16 You can see the continuum at the top of this first
17 slide. Children can be at little, definite or extreme risk,
18 depending on their past behavior. Below this continuum of
19 child firesetting behavior, I've shown the distribution of
20 children estimated to fall into each category.

21 Approximately 60 percent of the children are
22 classified as little risk, 37 percent as definite risk and
23 3 percent as extreme risk. Utilizing this risk framework, I
24 have extended this conceptualization in Table 2.

25 Table 2 outlines the behavior and situation factors
26 that contribute to child firesetting behavior. The specific
27 behavior factors are physical or energy level, thinking or
28 intellectual capacity, personality characteristics and

1 motivational factors. The specific situational factors
2 include family and school settings. Both behavior and
3 situational factors distinguish recurrent firesetters from
4 those children who are classified as little risk.

5 Who are the recurrent firesetters? Those children
6 classified as definite risk are mostly young boys between the
7 ages of five to thirteen. They have been described as more
8 mischievous, energetic, adventurous and aggressive than the
9 average child. They tend to have a very high energy level
10 which is often characterized by excessive restlessness and
11 inattentiveness.

12 They often exhibit irresponsible and impulsive
13 behavior with a low level for frustration. They are easily
14 prone to thrill-seeking activities which offer them immediate
15 pleasure and gratification. They typically are of average and
16 even high intelligence, however, they also are easily distracted
17 and sometimes have short attention spans. These children are
18 socially aggressive with their peers and often need to feel as
19 if they have control and mastery of their environment.

20 Many of these youngsters come from homes where the
21 father is absent and where they have little opportunity to
22 experience positive and meaningful relationships with adult
23 males. When these children do not have relationships with
24 their fathers, or other adult males, or when they do, the
25 parent figure is often hostile and rejecting and has difficulty
26 in setting limits on behavior.

27 Typically, these fathers will use overly harsh and
28 punitive methods of discipline. Many of these children look to

1 their mothers for warmth, acceptance, and affection, but many
2 times they find that their mothers are preoccupied, especially
3 if they are solely responsible for the financial support of
4 the family. As a result of these less than adequate relation-
5 ships with parental figures, these children often feel
6 neglected and unwanted. Many of these children have feelings
7 of low self-worth.

8 Although it has been mentioned that these children
9 generally have average and sometimes high intelligence, they
10 also have problems in constructively channeling their
11 capabilities in school. They have short attention spans and
12 lack the ability to concentrate.

13 Frequently, their academic performance is poor, and
14 they develop an attitude of their not being able to succeed.
15 Because they are easily distracted, they often find themselves
16 in trouble with the school authorities, and are the subject of
17 many poor conduct evaluations.

18 The mischievous, adventurous, impulsive nature of
19 these children lead them into situations where they are at
20 risk for deviant and unconventional activities. Fireplay and
21 firesetting is one way in which these children express their
22 aggressive behaviors. Often these children set fires to
23 diffuse their excessively high energy level, or to express
24 their feelings of anger and frustration over their family or
25 school situations.

26 They may be involved in setting one or more small
27 fires near their home alone, or with one or two other friends.
28 Sometimes they will let someone know about the fire so that

1 it can be extinguished, but they may be embarrassed and may
2 not want to openly admit their involvement. After a fire,
3 they are often confused and scared. I would like to describe
4 a case example of a child who is at definite risk.

5 Johnny is a seven year old child who lives with his
6 mother. Mother and father have not lived with one another
7 since Johnny was two, and Johnny and his father do not see one
8 another. For the last two years, mother has been living with
9 a man, and she reports that he and Johnny have an average
10 relationship.

11 He likes to spend time with Johnny, but at times he
12 can be extremely rigid and overly punitive when Johnny does
13 something he doesn't like. Just recently, mother has
14 separated from her current companion because he physically
15 abused her. Johnny has been witness to this physical abuse
16 several times.

17 Just after the separation, Johnny's behavior
18 problems began to appear. Mother noticed in Johnny a shortness
19 of temper, a lack of concentration, and a tendency to express
20 his anger by physically destroying his toys. Mother reported
21 that Johnny had been curious about fire since the age of three
22 or four when she found him playing with matches.

23 At that time, she had taught him how to strike a
24 match correctly. He would practice by striking the match,
25 blowing it out and throwing it in the fireplace. He also was
26 told never to play with matches, and that if he wanted to
27 strike a match, he would have to ask permission.

28 However, mother reported that during the past few

1 months she had found him twisting up lengths of paper, striking
2 a match to ignite the paper, and then throwing the paper in the
3 fireplace. She asked him to stop doing this and described
4 how dangerous it was, and the potential consequence of setting
5 the house and themselves on fire. Johnny's most recent episode
6 had been to twist up a paper, ignite it by lighting it on the
7 gas stove and trying to run from the kitchen to the fireplace
8 in time to discard the burning paper.

9 Unfortunately, he was unsuccessful in getting from
10 the kitchen to the fireplace in time, and the burning paper
11 fell on the carpet and started a fire. Johnny became scared
12 and confused and ran to his mother for help. Luckily she was
13 in another part of the house and could arrive in time to
14 extinguish the fire herself. However, it was this incident
15 that led Johnny's mother to call the fire department for help.

16 In this case, there are definite signs of behavior
17 problems and family discord. Although for Johnny there is an
18 obvious connection between the separation taking place in his
19 family, and his problems controlling his anger, not all cases
20 are this clear cut. It is always important to try to determine
21 the linkages between the child's behavior and what is currently
22 happening at home and in school.

23 Johnny's fireplay has gone well beyond the curiosity
24 phase. He had exhibited repeated fire starting behaviors, in
25 spite of his mother's attempts to educate him in a constructive
26 but firm manner. Johnny was more than just interested in fire,
27 he was actively involved in testing the limits of his mother's
28 authority. His repeated attempts at lighting the papers and

1 throwing them into the fireplace may represent a way for him
2 to express his own internal turmoil and confusion about his
3 current family situation.

4 These definite risk children have special personal
5 characteristics and social behaviors which increase the
6 likelihood that they will be involved in firesetting. There
7 is also a small percentage of youngsters who are at extreme
8 risk. For the most part they are young boys between the ages
9 of 13 to 16.

10 These youngsters are often ruled by their impulses
11 and actively seek stimulation and excitement. They have a long
12 history of delinquent or antisocial acts such as stealing,
13 truancy, and fighting with peers. They are typically defiant
14 and resentful, and are openly hostile to authority. Many are
15 incapable of feeling or expressing any remorse or guilt.

16 They are generally of average intelligence, however
17 they have little motivation to perform well. These boys have
18 problems establishing and maintaining positive relationships
19 with their friends, teachers, and parents.

20 These extreme risk youngsters usually set fires out
21 of anger or revenge. They also can be motivated by peer
22 pressure and antagonism for authority. They may be involved
23 with school fires after school authorities have insisted on
24 their suspension or expulsion.

25 The fires are usually set away from the home and with
26 a group of friends. These children or teenagers will not
27 notify anyone after the fire has started and they will not
28 admit to being involved. Generally, they will be incapable of

1 feeling or expressing any guilt over having started the fire.
2 Watching the fire burn is often pleasurable for them. They
3 appear to be attracted to the flames and the magic and power
4 of the fire.

5 In fact, the fire is so fascinating to them that they
6 sometimes will be found very near the fire they have set
7 watching it burn. I would like to briefly describe a case
8 example of a youngster who is at extreme risk for firesetting.

9 Michael is a 14 year old who lives with his father
10 and a younger brother. His mother and father divorced when
11 Michael was 10, and his mother has recently remarried.

12 Michael's father is employed as a truck driver and leaves for
13 work early in the morning and arrives home late in the evening.

14 When his father has had to take long overnight trips,
15 Michael and his brother spend time with their mother. Michael's
16 father describes his son as a good kid, but he wishes he were
17 more obedient. His mother says she has a very difficult time
18 talking to him, and she feels that he never really listens to
19 her or takes her seriously.

20 Michael is a very bright young boy, but he has been
21 expelled from several public schools because he has been
22 involved in repeated fights with his peers. He tends to take
23 on the role of class bully, and seems to enjoy antagonizing
24 others into fighting. Michael is currently attending a
25 private school where his grades have been marginal and his
26 conduct average.

27 As a young child, Michael liked to play with
28 matches and start small trash can fires. Both of his parents

1 thought he was going through one of those stages, and after a
2 few months, these behaviors would stop. Last week while
3 Michael and his brother were staying with their mother, they
4 both fell into serious trouble. Michael, his brother, and some
5 other teenagers were playing in a nearby schoolyard on a
6 Saturday.

7 Someone noticed that a door leading into the school
8 was open, and the group entered. Apparently the teenagers
9 proceeded to vandalize school property by breaking windows,
10 overturning furniture and writing obscenities on the walls.
11 Once they finished, all the boys left for home. Michael and
12 his brother, however, returned to the school and set two or
13 three small fires. Then they left the school and returned home
14 to their mother.

15 When they were eating dinner together that evening,
16 their mother became aware of the fire set in a nearby school,
17 because it was an item on the television's 6:00 p.m. news. It
18 was reported that there had been over \$300,000 in property
19 damage. Their mother knew they had been playing in the school-
20 yard and immediately became suspicious. After much questioning
21 and pressure, Michael admitted that he had started the fire.

22 Michael had a history of being involved in various
23 antisocial behaviors. He apparently has difficulty adjusting
24 to school environments and almost seizes the opportunity to
25 get himself into trouble and expelled. The lack of attention
26 and supervision in the home may be a critical problem, leading
27 Michael to pursue recognition in socially undesirable ways.

28 Michael apparently felt no guilt over having set the

1 school fire, and he made no attempt at trying to extinguish it
2 or calling for help. At the very least, Michael needs an
3 intensive psychological evaluation to determine the motivations
4 behind his fire starting and other delinquent behaviors. More
5 than likely, the psychological assessment will reveal a very
6 disturbed and upset teenager, and long-term professional
7 counseling might be recommended both for Michael and one or
8 more members of his family.

9 How can we help these children? How can we help
10 these youngsters? The information we have to date suggests that
11 if we do not offer to help them, they will either continue
12 their firesetting behavior, or graduate to more serious anti-
13 social activities. Here is what I propose as one way to
14 tackle the problem of juvenile firesetting.

15 Table 3 outlines a strategy for helping firesetters.
16 Because we can determine the risk level of those children who
17 become involved in fireplay and firesetting, and because we
18 are beginning to understand their psychology, we can now offer
19 certain kinds of intervention programs.

20 For children classified as little risk, our experi-
21 ence has shown that brief educational programs are extremely
22 effective. For children classified as definite risk, our
23 experience shows that educational programs are important, but
24 because of the particular psychology of these children, a more
25 long-term intervention is most beneficial.

26 One approach to helping these definite risk children
27 is the Firehawk Companion Program, which pairs these young
28 fatherless boys with firefighter volunteers who act as a long-

1 term friend and role model. Given the apparent success rate
2 of this type of intervention, it seems like the Firehawk
3 method of helping should be recognized as effective.

4 For the small percentage of children classified as
5 definite risk, their recurrent firesetting behavior is only a
6 small part of a much larger problem they have, adjusting and
7 coping with the realities of their world. Their behavior
8 demands long-term, intensive professional help. While these
9 extreme risk children are identified, they should be referred
10 immediately for professional treatment.

11 The state of the art of how to help child firesetters
12 has advanced considerably in the last 10 years thanks to the
13 many dedicated individuals working in the fire service. We
14 can now identify and classify child firesetters, and we are
15 beginning to develop methods of helping them overcome their
16 problems.

17 However, I believe we are also at a new beginning in
18 the field. We must now take the knowledge we have accumulated
19 about child firesetting and bring it to fire departments and
20 communities across the country so that they can take advantage
21 of the tools available to prevent child firesetters from
22 burning America. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Dr. Gaynor, thank you very much.
24 We appreciate the time and effort you've put into this. We
25 appreciate your testimony here today. Senator Davis, any
26 questions?

27 SENATOR DAVIS: Only to commend the lady for the
28 very fine presentation. It is -- I couldn't help think that

1 that child could either have become a firesetter, or a
2 burglar, or a rapist, or any number of other things. It just
3 happens that a smaller percentage do firesetting, thank
4 goodness.

5 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you, Jessica. Our
6 next witness is Jerry Partain from the Department of Forestry
7 who is not here. It will be Greg Winterbottom from Senator
8 Paul Carpenter's Office. The witness after Greg will be
9 Battalion Chief Tomes of the San Diego City Fire Department.
10 He has to get back to San Diego, so we'll try to take him on
11 before lunch.

12 Greg, good morning.

13 MR. WINTERBOTTOM: Good morning, Mr. Chairman,
14 Senator Davis. I'm here on behalf of Senator Carpenter today,
15 and he would like to acquaint the Committee with the merits of
16 the National Firehawk Foundation. It's a nonprofit, tax
17 exempt organization, formed for the purpose of supporting
18 fire safety and prevention programs.

19 I'm sure you've heard some of the other statistics
20 today, but in 1970's, 54.6 percent of all arrested arsonists
21 in the United States were under the age of 18, including 11
22 percent of those age 10 or under. It is only since '79 that
23 the problem of child firesetting has received national attention
24 and has been met with successful programs.

25 In 1979, the United States Fire Administration, an
26 office within the Federal Emergency Management Agency, announced
27 that it would begin research and development for programs to
28 categorize and treat child firesetters. Also in 1979, an

1 independently conceived plan for counseling child firesetters
2 was developed in San Francisco. This effort was granted
3 financial support by the United States Fire Administration.
4 The result was the successful Firehawk Child Firesetting
5 Counseling Program, now the model for a national program to be
6 developed and directed by the National Firehawk Foundation.

7 The short-range objective of the Foundation is to
8 plan, develop and distribute to fire departments and communities
9 across the nation the Firehawk Program. This program is
10 designed to reduce the incidence of fires, particularly those
11 where children are either the victims or are the setters. The
12 program provides a comprehensive fire safety and prevention
13 training, and pairs fatherless children who have been
14 identified as firesetters with firefighter volunteers.

15 The long-term objective of the Foundation is to
16 support research, educational and intervention programs aimed
17 at fire safety and prevention. The Foundation's board of
18 directors and its advisory council are comprised of nationally
19 recognized experts from all quarters of the national fire
20 service, as well as mental health experts and civic, corporate
21 and political leaders. The Foundation is a nonprofit,
22 nonmembership organization.

23 Damage caused by fires has increased ten times during
24 the past decade. Direct damage in 1979 was estimated at \$1.3
25 billion. Indirect damage, which is defined as losses in tax
26 revenues, wages, unemployment insurance payments, and
27 relocation costs, was estimated at over \$15 billion.

28 In 1980, statistics showed almost 3 million fires

1 cost 6,600 deaths, with 53 percent of the multiple fire victims
2 under the age of 13. The increases in the incidence of fire
3 and the resulting loss of life and property is a major national
4 problem.

5 While the rate of all fires increased tenfold over
6 the past decade, during that same period, arson increased 325
7 percent. The United States has the world's highest rate of
8 arson, with one out of every four fires intentionally set.
9 Statistics reveal that the population of known firesetters is
10 dominated by youngsters. Arson has reached epidemic propor-
11 tions and we must handle it soon.

12 Until recently, child firesetting was not
13 recognized as a significant cause of fires. Three major
14 problems contribute to this oversight. First, there are some
15 poorly kept statistics. Secondly, parents were hesitant to
16 seek help for their children; and thirdly, there has been a
17 lack of scientific knowledge about the cause and the solutions
18 of firesetting behaviors in children.

19 These three factors, the lack of accurate statistics,
20 the hesitancy of parents to seek help for their children, and
21 the absence of scientific knowledge about the causes and
22 solutions to child firesetting have contributed to the
23 significant cause of fires in our nation.

24 The time has come to develop positive programs that
25 can guide our nation's youngsters away from the devastation
26 and tragedy of the firesetting behavior.

27 With grant support from the United States Fire
28 Administration, the Los Angeles County Fire Department, in

1 association with psychologist Dr. Ken Fineman, developed and
2 categorized a screening system for children firesetters. The
3 system published in manual form in 1980 is designed to be
4 used by fire departments and children -- to provide children
5 services.

6 It divides children into three levels of risk for
7 involvement in firesetting -- little, definite and extreme.
8 This new system enables fire service personnel, without
9 extensive training, to identify children who are, or could
10 become firesetters.

11 Statistics compiled by Los Angeles in developing
12 its system revealed that 80 percent of the children categorized
13 as definite risk for firesetting can be described as young
14 boys, ages five to thirteen, and coming from homes where there
15 is inattentive or absent fathers, and experiencing a recent
16 family or school-related change.

17 I'm sure you heard some of the prior testimony to
18 that fact.

19 As the Los Angeles categorization and screening
20 system was being readied, with new information available on
21 the nature of child firesetters, the United States Fire Adminis-
22 tration turned to psychologist, Dr. Jessica Gaynor, for the
23 research and development of a treatment program for child
24 firesetters.

25 The plan was to develop and test a concept
26 organized by Pamela McLaughlin, fire safety volunteer.
27 Observing her own boys interacting with firefighters, she
28 hypothesized that a child's firesetting behavior could be

1 eliminated if the child was provided with a firefighter who
2 could be a positive role model.

3 The firefighter, besides providing the male attention
4 the child lacked, would have specific goals in working with
5 the child firesetter. These goals include: raising the
6 child's feeling of self-worth; teaching the child to express
7 his emotions; exploring with the child the recreational
8 resources available to them; teaching the child some basic
9 concepts of fire safety and prevention.

10 Several firefighters immediately expressed interest
11 in the program and offered to volunteer their time. A
12 psychological screening and training program was developed
13 for the firefighter volunteers by Dr. Christopher Hatcher.

14 A research program was designed to assess the
15 effectiveness of matching definite risk children with fire-
16 fighter volunteers, to evaluate the specific impact of providing
17 companionship for these children.

18 The 30 children in the research program were chosen
19 for having the firesetter profile characteristics. In addition,
20 the children entering the program were found to have moderate
21 difficulty controlling their impulses and to have problems
22 expressing their emotions. The 30 paired children and their
23 parents gave informed consent to undergo complete psychological
24 assessments before beginning the program and the one year
25 participation.

26 Six months after beginning the program, there were
27 no known incidents of firesetting by any of the 30 children.
28 While a one-year psychological follow-up is not yet complete

1 for all the children and their families, the 100 percent
2 no-rekindle rate is still intact.

3 Throughout the two year research and development
4 phase, the Firehawk Children's Program expanded. The program
5 grew into a comprehensive package of five major components,
6 all aimed at teaching children fire safety and prevention.

7 The Firehawk Children's Program is a volunteer
8 program. Establishing it in fire departments requires
9 minimal resources, and it costs little to maintain because the
10 majority of the staff time is donated through volunteers.
11 Private donations underwrite the few expenses of the program,
12 and the Firehawk Children's Program provides a way of involving
13 youngsters in fire department activities that will help them
14 to grow and mature into responsible community citizens.

15 In closing, Senator Carpenter hopes to see the
16 Committee address the issue of child firesetting as a disease
17 with positive solutions, rather than a crime that requires
18 incarceration or institutionalization.

19 As you know, both Dr. Jessica Gaynor and Pam
20 McLaughlin are here, and I'm sure they would appreciate
21 answering any questions. Thank you.

22 SENATOR DAVIS: Thank you very much for your testimony
23 and this further tribute to the Firehawk Foundation, and all
24 of the other people that are working towards the same direction.
25 So thank Senator Carpenter for us.

26 MR. WINTERBOTTOM: Thank you, Senator.

27 SENATOR DAVIS: Now, we're going to take Battalion
28 Chief W. J. Tomes from the San Diego City Fire Department so

1 he might travel back to San Diego.

2 BATTALION CHIEF TOMES: Senator Davis, other
3 members of the Committee, I'd like to just take a few minutes,
4 and discuss a little bit of what's happened to us in San
5 Diego. Also, I'd like to have Captain Raines come up and
6 deal with some specifics on juvenile firesetters.

7 I've learned a lot today. I really appreciate the
8 opportunity you've provided by having this Committee. I'm
9 sure that we're going to take a lot of these ideas back to
10 San Diego. We feel that juvenile firesetters is a problem.
11 We've been dealing with it in a certain fashion, and we feel
12 that you need to keep on top of these things if you're going
13 to have good, successful programs, and continue to change them.

14 Our story in San Diego has, as I've said, been very
15 successful. One of the reasons for that success, by the
16 way is Assemblyman Larry Stirling, which I'm sorry he couldn't
17 be here, is certainly a member of this Committee, was a
18 councilman in San Diego at the time we set up our arson program,
19 and was extremely supportive in getting us funds, and so forth,
20 and getting us started.

21 We initiated this program in 19 -- June of 1980, and
22 we called it the Metro Arson Strike Team, which we use the
23 acronym of MAST to represent that. We hope this thing very
24 much in our city, and I think the point here, I'm going to
25 try and make, is the use of data, and how important it is to
26 use data accurately if you're going to be successful in
27 dealing with juveniles, or the arson problem in general.

28 We started the typical arson team, we had eight

1 fire types, and six police types, we put them together under
2 one roof and developed a team from those 14 people. We feel
3 that is extremely important also in any dealings with arson,
4 that the police and fire have a meeting of the minds, and that
5 they work together as a unit.

6 Since the inauguration of this unit, we've reduced
7 arson. San Diego was burning like the rest of the nation in
8 1980. We had a \$13 million fire loss due to arson that year.
9 After the first year of operation of the MAST team, it was
10 reduced to \$8 million; in 1983 it was reduced to \$5 million;
11 and this year we're reaching our four year goal, we're running
12 right up -- projecting out, right about \$4 million, which is
13 what we projected when we started the program.

14 It has been one of our most successful programs that
15 we have ever started in our fire department. It's one of
16 those things where you make a long four year commitment, you
17 stick to it, and you see success.

18 One of the things that we wanted to do to try and
19 measure success was as I said before, to develop accurate
20 data so that we could look at it, and say, okay, we're doing
21 the right things, we're not doing the right things. One of
22 those, of course, was the arson loss, and the other was our
23 arrest rate and cancellation rate.

24 We continued to monitor those arrest rates and
25 cancellation rates, I know everybody does this a little bit
26 differently, but we measured our ability based on the -- all
27 the cases that we investigate, which is all the significant
28 arson cases in the city, that's any arson in a structure or a

1 vehicle, and any major brush or grass fires, and we've
2 developed how much -- how many cases we cancelled, how many
3 arrests that we made.

4 This past year we had an arrest rate of around 55
5 percent, and we cancelled 40 percent of all the cases that
6 we investigated. Unfortunately, many of the cases that we
7 did cancel were involved with juveniles. We feel that the
8 real key, though, here, to the success of this program is
9 based on taking this data, and getting it to the community.

10 We have used MAST, as I say, it's an acronym. In
11 San Diego MAST is synonymous with arson now. Most of the
12 people in our jurisdiction know when you say MAST you're
13 dealing with the Arson Strike Team, and by using the media,
14 we've -- and this being television, radio, the newspapers,
15 we've had a chance to really put a seed in the peoples mind
16 that this is a very effective unit, it's a very good unit.

17 I think what we've done is probably, you know, made
18 the unit better in the public mind than it actually is, and
19 I guess that's the key to the thing here, is if you can get
20 this across, that hey, this unit is capable of solving any
21 arson case that happens in this city, it seems to send a
22 message to the community.

23 I think that's again been our real key in reducing
24 the losses, and getting arson under control. When we look
25 around the country, at other cities like ours, we're the
26 seventh largest city in the country right now, we find that
27 we're kind of alone in this thing, and we feel, again, that
28 that's because -- I think the people in our jurisdiction

1 recognize if they're going to set a fire in our camp, there's
2 a very strong chance they're going to get caught, and we do
3 advertise our arrest rates. We do make arrests, we make sure
4 they're on television, and we get outstanding support from
5 our media.

6 In fact, this past year, we track our arson for
7 profit fires, and we have only been identified six or seven --
8 possibly seven arson for profit fires out of our 18,000 fires
9 that we've had this year. So we feel that's an outstanding
10 record, and we hope to continue that.

11 I think the thing with success, a lot of times with
12 success comes complacency, and that's one thing we don't want
13 to be is complacent. We have a juvenile counseling program,
14 and as I said, we're looking to improve that. I'd like to
15 have Captain Jim Raines come up and just briefly describe,
16 you know, what we are doing with juveniles, and what we hope
17 to learn, and benefit from this program.

18 Thank you.

19 CAPTAIN RAINES: Thank you Senator Campbell, Senator
20 Davis, other members of the Committee. Thank you for the
21 opportunity to speak here.

22 In trying to direct -- directly to the question, I
23 would say that yes, there is a problem with juvenile fires,
24 and that approximately 50 percent of all fires we have in
25 San Diego are juvenile related. I would think that our
26 juvenile counseling program has been successful in San Diego
27 for a couple of reasons.

28 One, we've taken two juvenile -- or two fire

1 prevention specialists and had them trained by local
2 psychologists and experts in the field, and it is their job,
3 in addition to other duties, to counsel juveniles, and their
4 success rate has been very good. After 200 and some counselings,
5 we've only had two repeaters.

6 I think anything the state can do is to provide
7 professional training, or information for training, for not
8 only counselors, but investigators will be of a great help.
9 I think one of the points that's missed is that you cannot
10 counsel a juvenile unless you find out who he is. In the
11 past, funds for fire service training has fell far behind
12 other law enforcement.

13 I think police officers can go through POST
14 certified training and be -- and their local authorities can
15 can be reimbursed for their training, whereas a fire
16 investigator cannot. Although we've made great strides in
17 the recent past, again, any kind of support that the fire
18 investigators themselves can get as far as funding goes will
19 help the apprehension of juveniles, and thereby allow us to
20 counsel juvenile firesetters.

21 I think the formation of the Metro Arson Strike
22 Team itself has been one of the reasons for our success, and
23 we don't consider ourselves completely successful until we
24 catch all of the juvenile firesetters, and all of the fire-
25 setters period. But the fact that we've doubled our fire
26 investigation team in 1980, and more than halved our fire loss,
27 and our firesetters problem, I think speaks for itself.

28 It's simply an investment in time and money is made,

1 then I think some admirable products will come as a result of
2 that. Thank you.

3 SENATOR DAVIS: Thank you. A couple of questions
4 of either you or Chief Tomes, did I pronounce -- is Chief
5 Tomes still here? Yes. Have you used the technique of
6 Firehawk where you use a fire service officer to act as a sort
7 of a big brother, counselor, role model, and so forth? Has
8 that been part of your program?

9 BATTALION CHIEF TOMES: We have had a big brother
10 program, but it wasn't combined with our arson juvenile
11 program. We've read some good things about it, though, and
12 we're definitely interested in it. In fact, we want to have
13 the folks from Firehawk down to discuss that specific program
14 with us.

15 SENATOR DAVIS: It sounds like you have a highly
16 successful program based on your reduction in arson losses,
17 and an excellent detection program, which is absolutely
18 paramount, and -- but it might be well to think very seriously
19 about a type of program such as Firehawk.

20 Another question, is there any -- has there been
21 zero POST money spent for fire investigators, or is there
22 some help from POST?

23 CAPTAIN RAINES: As far as I know, Senator Davis,
24 there is no money for fire department employees. Fire
25 department investigators. I think that POST strictly reim-
26 burses training to police agencies, and I'm sure as you're
27 aware, in some cities it varies. In our city, the basic
28 responsibility for fire investigation falls under the

1 direction of the fire chief, and thereby, the fire investigation
2 unit falls under that direction. Any police officer that's
3 in that unit can get reimbursed through POST, but no fire
4 department employee, as far as I know, can get any kind of
5 reimbursement through POST.

6 SENATOR DAVIS: A third question, then, is there
7 any -- are there any California departments where arson is
8 investigated by the police service?

9 BATTALION CHIEF TOMES: Yes, there's a number of
10 those that are -- seem to be done both ways. Well, there's
11 three ways it seems to be being done throughout this state,
12 and actually, throughout the country. You have an all police
13 type fire investigative unit, and you have an all fire
14 department fire investigator unit, or you have a mix.

15 We went around the country and around the state,
16 what we could see was -- it seemed very obvious to us, looking
17 at everybody else's programs was that the ideal set up was
18 when you get the police and fire to join forces, take the
19 discipline of the fire service investigator, and the discipline
20 of a good police detective, put them together under one roof,
21 and use those two disciplines to work together under one
22 management team, and that's basically what we've been able to do.

23 Both the fire department and the police department
24 have laid down the old traditional walls, and the six police
25 types work in our office, we liaison real closely with police
26 management and fire management, and we look at them all as
27 just being part of that team. Whether they're police or
28 fire doesn't make any difference to us.

1 SENATOR DAVIS: All right. Then the fourth question
2 is, have any POST funds been set aside for training police
3 arson investigators?

4 CAPTAIN RAINES: We've had some of our police types --

5 SENATOR DAVIS: You know, as arson investigators.

6 CAPTAIN RAINES: As far as I know, Senator, the
7 only criteria for reimbursement on POST funds is that they
8 are -- is that the employee be a direct employee of a police
9 department. So if it's a POST certified class, and they are
10 an employee of the police department, they can be reimbursed.

11 BATTALION CHIEF TOMES: Some of our police
12 detectives have had POST training, and received some of --
13 you know, some training, but our fire types weren't able to
14 get that. What we were able to do, also, was use the
15 National Fire Academy for police and fire, that's been a nice
16 thing about the federal academy that Mr. Villella represents
17 is that they've been able to train both police and fire,
18 which has worked out very well.

19 SENATOR DAVIS: Just a comment, now, that your --
20 one of your eventual deputy chiefs, I think it was Gene
21 Muleheisen and I put in the original thinking and the -- and
22 I was a lobbyist in Sacramento that created POST in 1959, and
23 it was for police and sheriff's officers, for general
24 education of law enforcement.

25 Since that time, as Senator Campbell will testify,
26 almost everyone and his brother has come in under POST. I
27 mean, I think correctional officers are now there, and other
28 state-type investigators, some special districts, and it's

1 been expanded greatly. I have resisted much of that because
2 it's gotten away from the original concept of training the
3 beat policeman in being a better policeman, and beat deputy
4 sheriff in doing the same thing.

5 I would ask my colleague, Senator Campbell, to think
6 about the possibility of -- I hate to have this come from me,
7 of maybe having a legislative amendment that would allow POST
8 funds to be used for arson investigator training, including
9 the liaisons with service agencies in the community, and the
10 use of programs such as Firehawk, on the theory that arson
11 investigation essentially is a police function that adminis-
12 tratively within various jurisdictions either falls in fire,
13 or police, or in a combination of both of them.

14 So I see nothing that would do violence to the
15 original objectives of POST to train that small fraction of
16 the fire service who are fire investigators, fire -- people
17 who are peace officers under state law for the specific
18 purpose of arson investigation. Isn't that correct, they
19 are peace officers for that purpose?

20 BATTALION CHIEF TOMES: That would be extremely
21 helpful, it really would, I know the fire service would --

22 SENATOR DAVIS: But it would be better if rather
23 than -- Senator Campbell or I on our own to initiate such
24 legislation, for you to take it back to the fire organizations,
25 the California State Firemen's Association, and there's
26 undoubtedly a Fire Chief's -- California State Fire Chief's
27 Association --

28 BATTALION CHIEF TOMES: Yes.

1 SENATOR DAVIS: And you don't have to go to the
2 intermountain, or any of the rest of them, you just take care
3 of the ones within the state, and if they came to us and said,
4 we want a bill that would provide a portion of POST funds for
5 the specific purpose of training fire department personnel,
6 who are peace officers assigned to arson investigation, I
7 think Senator Campbell and I would jointly put in such a bill.
8 You might ask Senator Campbell.

9 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: No problem at all, that's a great
10 idea, Senator. Good idea.

11 SENATOR DAVIS: Okay. Back to the -- I now
12 relinquish the gavel, which I never had, back to the Chairman.

13 BATTALION CHIEF TOMES: Just one other little
14 detail on our juvenile program, just to throw out a statistic,
15 and I've heard several today, we have a -- since we started
16 doing our counseling program, we have counseled 226 juveniles.
17 We've had two repeaters. I've noticed -- it was interesting,
18 we thought we were doing good, then I noticed the Firehawk
19 Program hasn't had any, so I guess that's even a better
20 statistic, and yeah, we -- I think that's a -- it seems like
21 a great idea, and certainly good use of the firemen.

22 Senator Campbell, I'd just like to say on behalf of
23 the fire prevention officers of California, and I speak on
24 their behalf, personally thank you for your involvement in
25 fire prevention activities in the State of California, we
26 really do appreciate it.

27 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you very much.

28 CAPTAIN RAINES: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: The Committee will now recess
2 until the hour of 1:30.

3 (Thereupon the hearing was adjourned at 12:10 for
4 luncheon recess.)

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AFTERNOON SESSION

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3 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Good afternoon ladies and
4 gentlemen. We would like to reconvene again, and our first
5 witness this afternoon will be Evelyn Davis from the Children's
6 Television Workshop. Is she here now or -- yes, here she is.

7 (Preparing videotape presentation.)

8 MS. DAVIS: Sorry for the delay.

9 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: That's quite all right.

10 MS. DAVIS: Mr. Chairman, Senator Davis, members of
11 the Committee, I'm very pleased to be here today to testify
12 before the Committee, and to describe a public education and
13 mass media program for young children.

14 The Children's Television Workshop, or CTW, is the
15 first broadcast organization to develop programs that combine
16 measurable educational impact with mass entertainment appeal.
17 Now in its fifteenth year, the workshop has helped provide
18 information and education programming of social value through
19 its productions of Sesame Street, The Electric Company and
20 3-2-1 Contact.

21 Since 1969, Sesame Street has consistently drawn an
22 audience of 12 million preschoolers daily, plus 4 million
23 adults who watch without children. Seen in 74 countries,
24 Sesame Street is a symbol of educational television excellence.

25 Fred Villella has already mentioned that prior
26 statistics indicate that preschool children who make up seven
27 percent of our total population as a group suffer 17 percent
28 of the fire deaths and injuries. Because of this alarming

1 information, the Federal Emergency Management Agency asked the
2 Children's Television Workshop to consider the inclusion of
3 fire safety information on Sesame Street.

4 There is much evidence that a multi-faceted approach
5 to learning is the most effective method for children. Using
6 television as the impetus, teachers and parents can accomplish
7 more ambitious objectives than television alone can try for.
8 On the other hand, home and school learning can be bolstered
9 by the television medium. The Sesame Street Fire Safety
10 Project takes advantage of both strengths.

11 Over the last three years CTW, fire departments,
12 community organizations, public and private institutions have
13 joined forces in a nationwide effort to introduce fire safety
14 education to preschool children through their adult caregivers.

15 This program is based upon research that was
16 conducted by the Children's Television Workshop Research
17 Department and we have a summary of that research in this
18 brochure.

19 The project to date has involved more than 1,000
20 ares of the country, and directly reached 8 million preschoolers.
21 A few highlights of the project are:

22 National television coverage through a seven minute
23 segment on Good Morning America, which resulted in requests
24 for more than 30,000 copies of the Sesame Street Fire Safety
25 package. That package is this resource book and record with
26 fire safety information that parents and others can use in
27 English and in Spanish.

28 Mass media coverage provided 77 and a half hours on

1 television, 9 and a half hours on radio, and 317 documented
2 newspaper and magazine articles. The appeal of the project is
3 so strong that in the first nine months of this third year,
4 there has been 22 hours and 20 minutes of television coverage,
5 and 2 hours and 28 minutes of radio interviews.

6 Fire safety information has been interwoven into
7 the Sesame Street curriculum. Stories and articles on fire
8 safety have appeared in our Sesame Street Parent Newsletter,
9 that's this publication. It's also appeared in our 3-2-1
10 Contact Magazine which is designed for 8 to 12 year old
11 children, and in our 3-2-1 Contact Teachers Guide for use in
12 the classroom.

13 In one month off the press, a book entitled "A Visit
14 to the Sesame Street Firehouse", which this is, soared near
15 the top of the juvenile best seller list. This is a book
16 that's very inexpensively priced at a \$1.50 so it's available
17 for all. A collaboration with Statitrol produced a Sesame
18 Street Fire Safety Kit which was included with their top of
19 the line smoke detector.

20 I'd like to show you one short sample of how we have
21 included fire safety information in the basic Sesame Street
22 curriculum. Are we ready?

23 (Video presentation.)

24 MS. DAVIS: That's a brief sample of how fire
25 safety has been included in various segments of the show.

26 CTW staff have blanketed the country with major
27 presentations at conferences for groups as varied as the
28 Association for the Education of Young Children, Regional

1 Migrant Councils, Head Start Programs, day care centers, fire
2 inspectors, chiefs, educators groups and the U.S. Air Force.

3 Sesame Street Muppets and live cast members have
4 participated in a variety of events throughout the country as
5 part of the ongoing effort to heighten public awareness of the
6 need for fire safety education.

7 Public television stations have joined CTW staff in
8 mobilizing local community group involvement in fire safety
9 projects.

10 Assisted by the National Association of Local Cable
11 Programmers, special interactive cable broadcasts on fire
12 safety were produced in 240 locations in Alaska, the cities of
13 Columbus, Ohio; Atlanta, Georgia; Austin, Texas and New York,
14 New York. We know that the Austin show, for example, was
15 directly responsible for saving the lives of two young boys.
16 All of the cable shows have had a high repeat factor, 23 times
17 to date.

18 A pilot project integrating the Sesame Street Fire
19 Safety Project into the United States Air Force's safety
20 programs has been completed. The project is now expanding
21 into other branches of the armed services around the country
22 and overseas.

23 Hundreds of Sesame Street Fire Safety festivals
24 have been held throughout the country. In Illinois, for
25 example, Lonnie Jackson spearheaded a week long festival that
26 utilized 936 firefighter manhours to reach 7,450 people
27 directly; 877,450 people through the media, and countless
28 others through a downstream effect. Over 3,300 preschool

1 children were brought in by bus from schools within a ten mile
2 radius to participate in the festival.

3 To give you a little sense of what these fire
4 safety festivals have been like, we have a short tape of one
5 that was held in the South Bronx in New York City.

6 (Video Presentation.)

7 MS. DAVIS: A couple of other items that I didn't
8 show you that go with our projects. This is a refrigerator
9 sticker that's designed to help children remind their parents
10 to practice fire drills in the home; and this is a puzzle,
11 firefighters are our friends, that's available for children.

12 This brief overview describes how Sesame Street has
13 contributed to public education and therefore is: Using the
14 appeal of Sesame Street to focus national and local media
15 attention on fire safety issues; building and teaching life
16 saving habits to young children to help develop a fire safety
17 aware generation.

18 Stimulating combined community action through task
19 forces organized to deal with a community problem; involving
20 people in serious efforts that can change and better their
21 lives; helping teenagers achieve an awareness of fire safety
22 as an important parenting skill; providing an outlet for the
23 exercise of personal social responsibility; and demonstrating
24 the potential for effective use of cable as an interactive
25 community resource.

26 It is important that a sense of urgency concerning
27 the fire safety information and practices be encouraged and
28 sustained in every community in the country. Given the

1 mobility of the American population, fire safety awareness
2 is appropriate for urban, suburban and rural communities.
3 However, special attention should be paid to high risk areas.

4 I recommend the following as high priority program
5 areas: continuation of intensive efforts to develop fire
6 safety awareness and practices among the preschool population;
7 encouragement of the development of year-round media safety
8 campaigns; development of high visibility education programs
9 to ensure the use of early warning devices in the home and
10 enforcement of legislation requiring the installation of smoke
11 detectors in homes and public facilities.

12 The encouragement of all youth serving organizations
13 and agencies to include fire safety training in their programs;
14 encouragement of the development of neighborhood-based youth
15 tutoring youth projects designed to develop fire safety
16 awareness and participation in arson watch efforts.

17 The utilization of appropriate state agencies to
18 provide fire safety training for day care providers (an
19 example, through day care licensing agencies). Television and
20 radio stations should be urged to carry fire safety public
21 service announcements during prime time. The establishment of
22 state sponsored interagency task forces to be encouraged to
23 develop and carry out fire safety programs.

24 Public education can help develop an informed
25 population utilizing positive safety habits. I'm very pleased
26 that I've been invited here, one as a member of the advisory
27 board of the National Firehawks Foundation, and to have had
28 this opportunity to share some of our views and programs with

1 you. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

2 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Ms. Davis, thank you very much.
3 Yours is an excellent program that you've got ongoing, and
4 I've asked Blair if he can get copies of the material that you
5 have there for the members of the Committee.

6 MS. DAVIS: I'd be happy to.

7 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Senator Davis, any questions?

8 SENATOR DAVIS: Just to say thanks for not just
9 your fire prevention work, but everything else you do for
10 children, I think it's marvelous.

11 MS. DAVIS: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Ms. Davis.
13 Our next witness will be Ms. Elaine Pitts from the Firehawk
14 affiliate in the Turlock area.

15 MS. PITTS: Hi, members and Senators. Recently I
16 moved and I found several of these volunteer pins like I have
17 here. The one -- this one is from the Veterans Hospital in
18 La Jolla.

19 One day in looking through Woman's Day Magazine,
20 I saw a small article telling about the Firehawks' program. I
21 immediately sent off for literature concerning this program.

22 I'd like to tell you a little bit of my background
23 leading up to my speaking here today. I feel like I was born
24 a volunteer. At 14 I became an assistant den mother to the
25 cub scouts. Volunteering for young programs was a family
26 affair. As my father was president of little league and pony
27 league, plus a leader in Boy Scouts, I helped when I was needed.

28 One day in looking at my brother's Boy Scout magazine,

1 I found an article telling how one Cub Scout troop back east
2 would serve coffee or cocoa to weary Christmas Eve travelers.
3 I showed the article to my father, and he liked the idea.
4 Consequently, this program became an annual event in our town.

5 Through my father's participation, I learned to
6 take a chance and get involved in people's needs. He also
7 taught me to give a kid a chance, and loving them enough to
8 see that they are treated fairly.

9 In volunteering, I enjoyed serving people whether
10 one to one or starting a program from scratch.

11 While I was on my way to get a B.A. in social
12 science, I studied criminology. We went into Duel in Penryn.
13 Now Penryn was a youth reformatory. In the boys ward sat a
14 little boy on his bed. The guide told us the history of this
15 boy. This was 20 years ago. His story haunted me. He was
16 only 8 and had set many warehouse fires. He evidently had told
17 everyone that he wanted to eventually go to San Quenton. As
18 a last remark, the guide told us, his father sits on his can
19 all day.

20 After I received the information on how to start a
21 Firehawk affiliate in my community, I tried to encourage some
22 members of the fire department to start this program in their
23 vicinity. Unfortunately, some fire officials, although they
24 seemed to like the program, they would not give me permission
25 to proceed to implement this program.

26 I talked it over with Pamela, and she advised me to
27 propose this program to my City of Turlock. I gave the
28 literature to the Turlock Fire Marshal and the fire investigator.

1 After a few weeks they told me to proceed on the project.

2 When Pamela first started to promote her program, she
3 met many obstacles. But she persevered. She believed in
4 herself and her program. She knew if some firefighters would
5 take her seriously that they would open-heartedly endorse her
6 program. In her manual she states it's easy to get volunteers
7 to help the youth among firefighters. She knew they were warm
8 and caring people, especially with children.

9 Many new programs are hard to get started. Even
10 Dr. Semmelweis realized doctors needed to wash their hands
11 before going around and examining patients. Many of his OB
12 patients were dying. As he searched for an answer he
13 realized, he was spreading from the autopsy room, or contaminated
14 instruments and hands from other patients. He had the doctors
15 wash their hands in special solution. Death statistics went
16 way down.

17 However, his supervisor would not follow this
18 practice and discouraged other doctors from trying it.
19 Eventually Dr. Semmelweis was discharged by his supervisor.
20 Dr. Semmelweis was heart sick at the rapid return of death
21 among OB patients. He was so conscientious that he even
22 felt guilty over the number of women he might have infected
23 before he realized that washing the hands was extremely
24 important. Now all doctors wash their hand before examining
25 or doing surgery on a patient.

26 We have all opened our lives and hearts to a commit-
27 ment as volunteers of Firehawks. How many years have fire-
28 fighters wanted a way to stop arson and help arsonists?

1 I have to tell you a fire story that I heard
2 recently. Three children were playing in a playhouse. The
3 boy decided to play indians. He tied his sisters with a rope
4 to a post, then he disappeared. When he came back, he set
5 the playhouse on fire. The girls' screams were heard, and
6 they were rescued in time. Even a child's rich imagination
7 can become a disaster. Children's lives have been damaged
8 or destroyed by other unsafe methods than by fire.

9 I believe that children from two and a half to five
10 years old and their parents should have a program of safety.
11 Maybe films, or Smokey the bear-like comic books could help
12 teach better safety steps. I personally have saved two
13 children from suffocating in plastic bags over their heads.
14 Both those children were out of sight of their parents. Do
15 you know it's a bad idea for children to wear anything with
16 their name on it? Especially young children, because some
17 stranger could see their name and call them over by saying,
18 "Hi, Kim," and Kim is more likely to respond to someone who
19 calls their name on her with this response. It happened to
20 me one day when I had my volunteer name tag on.

21 These are just two examples of the need to be better
22 informed, not just in fire safety, but safety period.

23 The Firehawk's program not only will save buildings,
24 but lives, and bring understanding and love to the type of
25 child who sets fires. That child is less likely to become an
26 adult arsonist, much harder to catch, or be put in jail to
27 mature to other criminal thoughts.

28 We should applaud the Firehawk's program, Pamela,

1 and the many volunteers involved in this program. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you very much. We
3 appreciate your testimony here today.

4 MS. PITTS: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: We appreciate the effort that
6 you're doing in Turlock too, thank you.

7 MS. PITTS: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Our next witness will be
9 Captain Richard Crispin from the San Francisco Fire Department.
10 Captain Crispin.

11 CAPTAIN CRISPIN: Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr.
12 Chairman, good afternoon Senator Davis, and other members of
13 the Committee. Chief Condon from the San Francisco Fire
14 Department has asked me to express his regrets for not being
15 able to attend this meeting. He's busy with other items in
16 San Francisco. However, he did want to express the -- his
17 thanks for hearing this kind of a problem. We're certainly
18 concerned with it in San Francisco, and we are actively
19 pursuing juvenile firesetting programs in San Francisco. I'll
20 attempt to describe a couple of them for you so that you can
21 evaluate how we're approaching the juvenile firesetting problem.

22 The San Francisco Fire Department's Juvenile
23 Firesetter Program relies upon public fire education, such as
24 the Learn Not to Burn Program, to educate juvenile firesetters
25 who may be motivated by curiosity and nonmalicious mischief.
26 Presently in its third year, the Learn Not to Burn curriculum
27 taught in the public schools has made a tremendous impact on
28 the fire prevention awareness of the youths of this city.

1 During the first year of the program, over 300
2 teachers attended the Learn Not to Burn workshops. Approxi-
3 mately 15,000 students of the 2nd, 5th, and 7th grade levels
4 received materials and instructions from this privately
5 funded program, which incidentally was set off by Pamela
6 McLaughlin, the active person in the Firehawks Program.

7 The generation of school children now being exposed
8 to the Learn Not to Burn curriculum will be the teachers of
9 the future. An independent evaluation of the program has
10 shown that there has been a positive impact not only upon the
11 students, but on the teachers and parents as well.

12 The San Francisco Fire Department has also maintained
13 an active juvenile firesetter diversion program, commonly
14 known as Firehawks, for the past three and a half years. During
15 this time, approximately 50 juveniles have been included in
16 the program, and of this number, 22 remain in contact with
17 firefighter counselors at the present time.

18 The Firehawk diversion program is designed to apply
19 to juvenile firesetters under the age of 14 years. Prospective
20 participants are referred into the program by schools, social
21 services, the youth guidance centers, juvenile court, fire
22 department personnel, parents, and other concerned citizens.

23 After screening by a family psychologist to determine
24 if the child has a minor firesetting problem, or requires long-
25 term counseling, those in the middle range of firesetting
26 behavior are matched with firefighter counselors for weekly
27 meetings and/or outings. This informal counseling program
28 appears to be successful as known recidivism is negligible.

1 It is our opinion, based upon experience, that the
2 juvenile firesetter program is best handled with effective
3 public fire education programs. Juvenile firesetter diversion
4 programs are necessary and beneficial, but the scope of this
5 portion of the problem appears to be exaggerated, particularly
6 in the area, as I see it, of the statistics that have been
7 generated with regard to 11 percent of the arrests being
8 amongst children 10 years of age and older -- younger, excuse me.

9 I surveyed the Uniform Crime Report, and I couldn't
10 find this statistic anywhere in the report that was issued in
11 September of 1983 which would pertain to problems during 1982.
12 I was an investigator for approximately 13 years, and during
13 that time, I had no occasion to arrest a child under the age
14 of 10. I think there may have been a misinterpretation of
15 a graph that was in the Uniform Crime Report which alludes
16 to age specific groups in a population of 100,000 or more.
17 There was a 10.97 incidence of individuals arrested under the
18 age of 10 in populations of 100,000 or more, and I have some
19 documentation that I will submit to the Committee for your
20 review in order to analyze this problem.

21 We don't feel that this is a heavy problem in San
22 Francisco, 10 years and under. We're primarily concerned with
23 juveniles who are involved in firesetting activities between
24 the age of 14 and 18 years.

25 Incidentally, in the Uniform Crime Report for 1982,
26 which was released by the FBI, they indicate that the incidence
27 of juvenile firesetters was 37 percent for those under the
28 age of 18 years, and this again, as I said, we will provide you

1 in documentation. However, we don't find this to be extremely
2 relevant, because it is a serious problem, it's one that we
3 appreciate addressing with this Committee, and in other areas
4 of the fire service.

5 Extensive statistical analysis of the juvenile
6 firesetter problem in San Francisco indicates that it's
7 virtually impossible to match our juvenile arson rate --
8 arrest arson rate, with those that have been quoted in various
9 publications. A distinction must be made between the juvenile
10 who may be driven by curiosity, such as children who are
11 simply too young to appreciate the dangers in playing with
12 matches, and youths who are motivated by the same factors as
13 adult arsonists. This would be vandalism, malicious mischief,
14 revenge, crime concealment, intimidation and profit.

15 Juvenile firesetters who are motivated by the same
16 factors as adult arsonists, and are responsible for damage to
17 the property of another, should, in most cases, be placed into
18 the juvenile justice system for professional help, and possible
19 diversion to a counseling program.

20 Juvenile firesetters driven by curiosity should be
21 exposed to effective public education programs such as Learn
22 Not to Burn. Any assistance which the members of this
23 Committee -- this Joint Committee may be able to provide in
24 this area would be appreciated. This is in the area of handout
25 materials for the public schools, and things of this nature.

26 Incidentally, the woman that preceded me, I thought
27 had excellent recommendations for the Committee with regard to
28 some programs that could be established for public education

1 of children and juvenile firesetters.

2 Screening by professionals in order to distinguish
3 between firesetters, in order to identify and develop treatment
4 and other remedial options is critical. It is recommended that
5 community health service professionals be made available to
6 fire departments in order to assist in these evaluations.

7 It is our further recommendation that consideration
8 be given to expanding the 1983 Fireworks Study being conducted
9 by the State Fire Marshal's Office to include an analysis of
10 the effect upon children who are allowed to use safe and sane
11 fireworks. Our experience has shown that there is an alarming
12 increase in the carrying and use of open flame devices by
13 children before, during and after the holidays celebrated by
14 the use of fireworks.

15 Enclosed for your perusal are articles pertaining
16 to juvenile firesetters, and we also enclosed some intra-
17 departmental memos pertaining to our analysis of the statistical
18 problem. I'd be happy to answer any questions which you may
19 have.

20 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Senator Davis?

21 SENATOR DAVIS: In listening to the laundry list of
22 reasons why fires are set, I didn't ever hear anyone talk
23 about sexual motivation, and yet over the years, I can't tell
24 you where, I've heard that many fire bugs got a sexual
25 gratification out of fire. Is that a major percentage of
26 firesetting?

27 CAPTAIN CRISPIN: It has not been identified as one
28 in San Francisco. I think one of the earlier psychologists

1 alluded to pyromania and the sexual satisfaction that may be
2 derived from setting fires. We have had experiences whereby
3 we have had individuals who have set fires, and it appears
4 that this may have been a motivation, but it's not a serious
5 problem in San Francisco, or hasn't been identified as one, sir.

6 SENATOR DAVIS: In fire-lore, country-wide, is it a
7 microscopic percentage, or --

8 CAPTAIN CRISPIN: I would think so. According to
9 the information that I've received and read from uniform crime
10 reports in other areas, it is one that's not been identified
11 as a major problem. I think revenge is probably one of the
12 greater ones, and also arson for profit. Those are the two
13 that we concentrate mostly on, and those are the causes and
14 the motivation behind the majority of fires in San Francisco.

15 SENATOR DAVIS: Okay, thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Chief.
17 Appreciate it. Our next witness will be from the Los Angeles
18 Unified School District, Harry Sibley who is an arson
19 investigator for the District. Mr. Sibley?

20 MR. SIBLEY: Good afternoon Senator Campbell and
21 Senator Davis. My name is Harry Sibley, and I am a peace
22 officer for the Los Angeles Unified School District, assigned
23 to arson investigation. My primary responsibility is to
24 investigate school related fires.

25 I was a city policeman for five years, and have been
26 a school peace officer approximately 13 years. I've been
27 involved in arson investigation at the school district for
28 approximately the past two years.

1 I received my specialized arson training at the
2 California Fire Academy at Asilomar and have been certified
3 as a fire investigator by the California State Board of Fire
4 Services.

5 The Los Angeles Unified School Districts maintains
6 approximately 700 school sites and offices, enrolls approxi-
7 mately 664,000 students, and employs over 60,000 teachers and
8 other staff personnel. The District covers approximately 710
9 square miles.

10 School fires are a very significant financial and
11 morale problem within the District. During the past five and
12 one-half years, the District has experienced over 700 reported
13 incidents of arson to District property, amounting to nearly
14 \$7 million in property loss.

15 The majority of these incidents are small trash can,
16 dumpster, locker or shrubbery-type fires, however, the structure
17 fires are very costly financially and severely impact the
18 educational process. Whereas we can estimate \$7 million in
19 property loss, there is no way to put a dollar loss on the
20 impact to students, staff and the educational process.

21 For example, last week, Pacoima Junior High was the
22 victim of two arson caused fires in one evening which completely
23 destroyed one home economics and foods classroom, and a
24 hospitality room. The adjoining home economics room received
25 severe heat, smoke and water damage and will be lost for at
26 least one semester. Across the campus, the second fire damaged
27 a special education classroom.

28 The home economics, food and catering program,

1 affecting approximately 800 students, will be lost for one
2 semester to one year. Those students have been relocated in
3 the multipurpose room, displacing numerous physical education
4 classes. The special education classes have been relocated
5 into the library, resulting in an approximate 50 percent loss
6 of regular use of the library.

7 Another example, in 1982, a major arson caused fire
8 at Poly High School destroyed the attendance, counseling and
9 nurse's offices. The remainder of the administration building
10 was condemned causing the offices of the principal, assistant
11 principal, dean, nurse, counselor, attendance, et cetera, to
12 be relocated throughout the campus where space was available.

13 Again, the library was used for temporary offices,
14 resulting in loss of that areas use as a library. The extreme
15 inconvenience of the loss of the administrative center will
16 affect over 2,000 students and staff for approximately one and
17 one-half years during reconstruction.

18 Classroom fires frequently damage or destroy student
19 work and projects and teacher's irreplaceable lifetime
20 collections of photos, tapes, films and other educational aids.

21 If it were possible to apply a dollar factor to the
22 educational disruption resulting from these incidents, that
23 figure might exceed that of the property loss.

24 Approximately 99 percent of the Los Angeles Unified
25 School District's school related fires are arson caused.
26 Approximately 95 percent of these occur during off-hours or
27 closed hours. Therefore, they are not usually detected until
28 they are in advanced stages of destruction.

1 The great majority of our fires are started with
2 combustables found at the location. Los Angeles Unified School
3 District records indicate that nearly all of our arsons are
4 committed by male juveniles living in the neighborhood who
5 attend, or have previously attended the involved school.

6 Our records further indicate that most elementary
7 school fires are usually set by attending elementary students,
8 or those who have recently graduated to junior high. Junior
9 high school fires are usually set by attending junior high
10 students or those who have recently graduated to high school.
11 High school fires are usually set by attending high school
12 students.

13 Our rate of apprehension and detection for those
14 responsible is much higher with the elementary are suspects.
15 These suspects are more apt to tell their peers which aids in
16 their detection. Usually the crime involves more than one or
17 two participants, and the fire is usually subsequent to other
18 vandalism in the area of the school, which also aids in the
19 detection.

20 Younger suspects usually strike during earlier hours
21 of the evening, or on weekends when there are more potential
22 witnesses available. This age group is obviously easier to
23 interview successfully.

24 Older suspects are increasingly more difficult to
25 detect and prosecute because they're more sophisticated,
26 street-wise, and the motives are frequently different. They
27 may set a small fire to destory certain records which continues
28 to burn for several hours, escalating into a major structural

1 fire. On the morning after, when the severity of the act is
2 apparent, these suspects realize the seriousness of the
3 consequences and become far less communicative.

4 My experience indicates that the motives for juvenile
5 firesetting in the schools are variable. Elementary school
6 age firesetters tend to be motivated by thrill or as a part of
7 vandalism which they commit in the school. They are usually
8 opportunistic fires.

9 Junior high age suspects generally intend to disrupt
10 the school, are spiteful, or are expressing malicious attitudes.
11 They may also be opportunistic. High school age suspects
12 usually intend to destroy documents or records, or angry at a
13 teacher or the school, wish disruption, or are just malicious
14 and enjoy destroying or burning.

15 Our data tends to indicate that school arson fires
16 are not usually set to cover other crimes, or by adult suspects,
17 or financial gain, or to my knowledge, ever for any sexual
18 gratification.

19 Our statistics, as shown in the attachment, fail to
20 indicate any apparent parallels of arson incidents to burglary
21 and vandalism incidents. It's interesting to note that when
22 arson incidents are up, vandalism incidents are down. During
23 the highest year for burglary and arson -- or vandalism
24 incidents, the arson dollar loss was at its lowest for those
25 years reported.

26 Our records indicate that the district averages
27 approximately 40 structure type arson incidents per year, and
28 approximately 6,700 burglary and vandalism incidents per year.

1 Therefore, assuming that arson is a part of a
2 burglary and the entry, only slightly over one-half of one
3 percent of the burglar/vandals are firesetters. We're
4 extremely fortunate that more suspects do not decide to drop
5 a match in the wastebasket and put it under the teacher's
6 desk while they're inside the school before they leave.

7 Approximately two years ago, the Los Angeles
8 Unified School District's Security Section established an
9 anti-vandalism/crime prevention unit. The unit makes presenta-
10 tions to elementary age students. The presentations are
11 designed to increase student awareness of the effects of school
12 crime, vandalism and arson on their lives and school environ-
13 ment. The program utilizes school peace officers through the
14 medium of a puppet show to reduce vandalism and school crime.
15 The dangers and misfortunes of school arson are included in
16 the presentation.

17 Preliminary results of the program appears to
18 indicate a vandalism and crime reduction in the areas where
19 the program has been presented.

20 On the accompanying attachment relating to the
21 statistical information, I was noting that a lot of experts
22 feel that the younger age firesetters are opportunistic, and
23 it would seem that if that holds true in school arsons, that
24 when the vandalism/burglary incidents, which they are in the
25 school during closed hours, were up, that the elementary arson
26 figures would also be up.

27 However, according to the statistics we have
28 available, as the incidents of burglary and vandalism declined,

1 or I should say, increased from '78 through '80, the incidence
2 of elementary school fires declined during that period of time.
3 It's my opinion that possibly school arsons are more -- are
4 related more to the specific attitudes of the individual,
5 rather than to community attitudes, the ethnicity of the
6 area, the economic area, et cetera, and a lot of times it's
7 said that when crime is up, arson is up, and other crimes
8 follow suit.

9 However, according to these statistics, that does
10 not appear to be true. An interesting note that the east
11 side of Los Angeles, which is generally considered to be a
12 low income area, has the lowest school arson rate during the
13 last few years than any other part of the city.

14 The Los Angeles School District appreciates the
15 opportunity to provide the information to the Committee. We
16 trust that it will be beneficial in assisting in the reduction
17 of juvenile firesetting.

18 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Mr. Sibley, thank you very much.
19 Thank you, we appreciate your testimony here today.

20 MR. SIBLEY: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Our next witness will be Andy
22 Casper is not with us -- will be Chief Bill Patterson from
23 FEMA, the Regional Field Representative. Bill? For Region IX.

24 MR. PATTERSON: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman,
25 Senator Davis. I'm William Patterson, the Regional Fire
26 Representative for FEMA Region IX. The fire representative
27 position and responsibilities are to provide the -- serve as
28 a communicator and a coordinator for the Fire Administration

1 programs with state and local agencies.

2 The Region IX section includes the states of
3 California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii and the Pacific Trust
4 Territories. The United States Fire Administration is a major
5 division of the FEMA, and has, since its inception in 1975,
6 placed a high emphasis on the arson problem.

7 While no program is a panacea to this particular
8 problem, I hope to share with you a number of successful
9 programs the U.S. Fire Administration either has initiated,
10 supported, and/or encouraged in this war against arson. My
11 background includes some 35 years as an active fire service
12 member, and as such, have seen a number of these problems from
13 a various number of perspectives.

14 I am pleased the Committee has seen the necessity to
15 address the problem of arson, and particular the problem of
16 juvenile arson. As indicated in the correspondence relating
17 to this hearing, arson continues to take an intolerable toll,
18 both in human suffering and economic loss.

19 As additional data is collected, it becomes
20 tragically apparent that juveniles are a disproportionate
21 number of the participants. I'm confident today you will hear,
22 and have heard, a variety of statistics relating to the problem,
23 and I'm sure that many of these statistics will tend to
24 contradict one another.

25 Essentially, that says that available statistics
26 on arson in different and confusing -- point in different and
27 confusing directions at once. Even with substantially improved
28 reporting systems, reporting gaps still abound. Arsons are

1 misclassified, and widely divergent viewpoints on the meaning
2 of all this data continue to haunt agencies that collect
3 arson statistics.

4 For example, the U.S. Fire Administration's National
5 Fire Incident Reporting System, and the National Fire Protection
6 Associations' Reporting System, arson rose roughly between
7 six percent -- rose roughly six percent between 1980 and 1981.
8 In contrast, the FBI notes that arson incidents during this
9 same period to which Uniform Crime Reporting System by local
10 agencies dropped slightly during this same period.

11 Insurance companies using their own collection
12 system report arson as leveling off during this period, with
13 losses due to arson increasing. It's interesting to note for
14 the year 1981 and '82, most agencies indicate a modest decline
15 in arson fires. Even with this modest decline, the FBI 1982
16 reports a higher degree of juvenile involvement in the crime
17 of arson than any other index crime. It's obvious that arson
18 continues to plague us as a major social problem.

19 Before we attempt to find solutions to the juvenile
20 arson problem, let's essentially see what that problem is.
21 What is arson? The legal definition of arson varies from state
22 to state, but most states define the act of arson as the
23 willful burning of a building, or the property of another, or
24 the burning of one's own property for some improper purpose,
25 such as to collect insurance.

26 The motives for arson are many, but we'll identify
27 the five motives here, and put some percentages on those that
28 might tend to provide some clarity to Senator Davis' question.

1 Number one is vandalism, and the motive is vandalism,
2 and the estimate of arson by motive ends up anywhere from 30
3 to 40 percent. The second motive is revenge, anywhere from
4 18 to 30 percent. Arson for profit runs the gamut from 3
5 percent to 19 percent. And pyromania is a difficult one, as
6 you can see here by the percentage, it says it runs anywhere
7 from 6 to 25 percent. Crime concealment is 7 to 10 percent.

8 It's apparent that most of these major motives fit
9 the juvenile firesetter. We question why this alarming
10 increase in the crime of arson over earlier years and why now
11 a leveling off or decline in this crime. I have my own
12 opinion, based on many years of being deeply involved in fire
13 safety, and essentially, they are these:

14 1. Over the past year, a greater emphasis and
15 importance is being placed on arson today than ever before.

16 2. Firefighters and officers are better trained to
17 identify arson fires and preserve evidence.

18 3. Fire incident reporting systems have established
19 better data banks on which to draw conclusions.

20 So essentially what I'm saying is that we've had
21 arson, arson has been a problem in this country for years, and
22 only in the past several years have we really identified the
23 arson problem that's really occurred and been there for some
24 time. Now, we've made some efforts to improve or reduce that
25 arson problem, and many of the anti-arson programs established
26 are providing positive results, and we're seeing the conclusion
27 of some of those results today.

28 It's interesting to note that in an early arson

1 reduction seminar held in 1976 by the then National Fire
2 Prevention and Control Administration, now the U.S. Fire
3 Administration, they identified nine areas requiring attention
4 if we as a nation are going to control the arson problem, and
5 I'd like to identify those and see how we've impacted on those.

6 1. Responsibilities. The intent was to define the
7 responsibilities of the fire service, law enforcement, the
8 legal system, the insurance companies, and other public and
9 private bodies who should be concerned with the arson problem,
10 essentially, what's their role, and what's their responsibility.

11 2. Reclassification. Reclassify arson in crime
12 reporting systems to reflect its true status as a major offense.
13 You can see that essentially some of that's happened through
14 the inclusion of that in the FBI Crime Reporting System.

15 3. Training. There is a need to develop and apply
16 training programs which are directly keyed to job-related needs
17 of professional investigators and other categories of personnel
18 such as firefighters, police officers, attorneys, prosecutors,
19 judges, insurance adjusters, underwriters, and claims
20 supervisors.

21 5. Reporting. There needs to develop a better
22 reporting system, better data collection system, and data
23 analysis procedures on a local, state, and national basis.

24 6. Laws and regulations. There is a need to
25 promulgate and apply effective laws and regulations which are
26 as uniform as possible among jurisdictions.

27 7. Funding. There is a need to identify and develop
28 adequate sources of funding to combat arson.

1 8. Research and development. There is a need to
2 conduct research and development to make better and more
3 useful tools for arson investigation, and to provide a better
4 understanding of social and behavioral phenomena associated
5 with arson.

6 9. Uniform terminology. There is a need to develop
7 a consistent, uniform terminology that can be applied to
8 arson and incendiaryism by all disciplines and in all sections
9 of the United States.

10 Now, the fire community has responded to these needs,
11 and although the continuing effort is needed, and always will
12 be in many of these areas, let's identify some of the major
13 successful programs that are addressed in the nine needs
14 identified in the 1976 report.

15 1. Federal Arson Task Force. The Federal Arson
16 Task Force tends to coordinate all the activities of the
17 federal agencies in an arson investigation and arson activities.
18 While in the past we have the coastal authorities, we had the
19 FBI, a number of other federal agencies, the firearms, and
20 some of the other agencies doing their own thing, by coordinating
21 that into a Federal Task Force, we ended up being far more
22 effective in addressing the arson problem from the federal
23 level.

24 2. The development of arson task forces. Local,
25 regional, and state task forces. Membership includes fire,
26 law enforcement, and legal representation through whom a
27 coordinated approach has been far more effective in addressing
28 the arson problem. Through the encouragement of the Fire

1 Administration, a number of arson task forces were developed
2 and put into place across the country. Their success, in turn,
3 encouraged other agencies to develop such programs.

4 While I was Fire Chief in Santa Barbara County, I
5 was fortunate to have the opportunity to implement such a
6 program there. It's been an effective tool in addressing the
7 arson problem in that county.

8 Obviously, by having the various disciplines working
9 together, we're far more -- in a far better position to
10 ensure conviction and so forth, than we have in the past.

11 3. Public education programs. The U.S. Fire
12 Administration, local fire departments, and several major
13 insurance companies have developed public information
14 programs relating to the arson problem. You've heard about
15 some of these here today, Learn Not to Burn, the Sesame Street
16 programs, and some others.

17 4. Tipster and hotline programs. These programs
18 have served to provide the citizens access to agencies
19 investigating arson, and an opportunity to directly participate
20 in specific arson investigations. The WeTIP program, which
21 we'll hear more about later, is certainly one of the leaders
22 in this particular area here in California, if not in the
23 nation.

24 5. Juvenile counseling programs. Several successful
25 programs that were developed in California with the support of
26 the USFA, the San Francisco Fire Department, and the Los
27 Angeles County Fire Department. They continue to use slightly
28 differing but highly successful programs. I think you've heard

1 a good deal about those today, and hopefully this idea will
2 continue to spread on a nationwide basis.

3 6. Early warning systems. Several successful
4 programs such as AIMS, Arson Information Management System,
5 have been developed and implemented which predict arson targets
6 so that preventive activities may concentrate on the most likely
7 targets. This program is being expanded. The software for
8 that program is available to all fire agencies in the country.

9 7. Training programs. Many arson and fire scene
10 investigator classes have been held, both at central sites and
11 at many local training facilities. The coordination of the
12 National Fire Academy, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and
13 Firearms, through the support of the now defunct LEAA program,
14 carried training to many parts of our country and gave the
15 initial training to a substantial number of fire/arson
16 investigators.

17 As a point of interest, recently I was in the Republic
18 of Palau, I had the -- I was met by an FBI agent from
19 Honolulu who had been requested to assist them in an arson --
20 a very, very ticklish and sensitive arson fire that they'd
21 had in that Republic. It was particularly interesting for me
22 to note that he reported to me that he received his initial
23 training in arson in one of the Fire Administration programs.

24 So we've seen this tend to expand even on a world-
25 wide basis. The National Fire Academy continues to identify
26 fire/arson investigation as a major program area, and offers
27 a number of fire/arson related classes both at the National
28 Fire Academy, and in the outreach program in the field.

1 8. Reporting. The CFIRS, California Fire Incident
2 Reporting System, and the NFIRS, the National Fire Incident
3 Reporting System have provided an improved means of collecting,
4 storing and retrieving fire/arson statistics. While we've
5 heard some criticism of those particular systems here today,
6 I'd like to suggest that it -- while they certainly contend
7 to be improved, and we will continue to work to improve them,
8 I'd also suggest that I would doubt very much if we'd ever
9 develop a system that provides all of the information, and
10 all the data, and all the statistics that one particular
11 discipline needs.

12 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: I don't think there was any
13 criticism of the system, Bill, I think there was just an item
14 of what more information can we and should we be getting from
15 the system.

16 MR. PATTERSON: I read it that way, too, Senator.

17 9. Sharing information. The U.S. Fire Administration
18 operates the Arson Resource Center in which all arson related
19 articles and data are retained and available for those seeking
20 same. Also, arson resource directories have been published
21 and are available for the use of the U.S. Fire Administration
22 with information relating to successful programs and contact
23 points for such programs.

24 The newest of such publications is the Public
25 Technology's Incorporated Program, War on Arson and How to Win.
26 It was developed, financed and published through the cooperative
27 efforts of PTI, FEMA, and the Aetna Insurance Corporation.
28 Some of the other information sharing has come about through

1 legislation, which provided greater access between the public
2 sector, and the insurance sector relating to arson fires and
3 information and data that's collected by the individual agencies.

4 Recent changes in law provide for this sharing of
5 information between public and private agencies that had been
6 earlier restricted.

7 10. Funding. Funds for the continuation of the
8 War on Arson have been limited and restricted, or eliminated
9 at the federal, state and local levels. While hope exists for
10 passage of the Justice Assistance Act which provides substantial
11 federal support for arson related programs, each state and
12 local agency can profit by utilizing existing appropriate
13 programs.

14 I'd like to comment personally on the impact of
15 Prop. 13. What you gentlemen have heard here today are some
16 of the leading fire officials in the State of California, and
17 I'd like you to be well aware that the impact, the fiscal
18 impact on communities, on fire departments in this state, and
19 across the nation has tended to impact some of these programs
20 in a very negative manner.

21 You've heard today from some of the departments that
22 place high priority on the arson program, and the investigation
23 and public information and education, that isn't the case in
24 many parts of this state, and many parts of this nation.

25 These programs have provided a positive impact on
26 our nation's arson problem. I think we're seeing the results
27 of that impact. Although only some are directed specifically
28 towards the juvenile firesetter, all have application.

1 One area commonly overlooked on addressing the arson
2 problem is the capability of quickly controlling and extinguish-
3 ing such fires so that they fail to achieve their purpose. Such
4 technology is available to us through smoke detectors and quick
5 response sprinkler systems for structural property.

6 Essentially, the information is contained in this
7 particular document, and I'd like to make this document part
8 of the testimony here here, if I may, and I have two documents
9 here for the two Senators.

10 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you.

11 MR. PATTERSON: I will close with a statement made
12 in 1979 from Mr. Gordon Vickery, the Administrator of the U.S.
13 Fire Administration. I think that it emphasizes the importance
14 of implementing the programs that have proved as successful,
15 and I think what he says is still appropriate today.

16 "Arson has been studied to death. Our responsibility
17 now is to act -- coordinated actions which will reduce arson's
18 devastation to our cities, and to our people...Let's get on
19 with it."

20 I'd be happy to answer any questions.

21 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Chief, thank you very much. I
22 appreciate your testimony here today, and I appreciate your
23 joining with us. Our next witness will be --

24 SENATOR DAVIS: Could I ask a question?

25 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Oh, I'm sorry. Senator Davis.

26 SENATOR DAVIS: What's pyromania?

27 MR. PATTERSON: Pyromania is the sexual gratification,
28 or gratification for setting a fire one way or another, whether

1 it be sexual or otherwise. That falls into that area you're
2 talking about.

3 SENATOR DAVIS: That's 6 to 9 percent?

4 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: We'll let Dr. Gaynor maybe
5 respond to that. Dr. Gaynor, do you want to respond to that,
6 is that correct?

7 DR. GAYNOR: Yes, that's correct.

8 SENATOR DAVIS: One other question. What do you
9 think of the Firehawk program?

10 MR. PATTERSON: I think the Firehawk program is an
11 excellent vehicle for one part of the program. I hope what
12 I've tried to emphasize in my comments here today is that it's
13 a multifaceted problem, and it's a variety of kinds of
14 activities and efforts that all of us have to engage in if
15 we're going to manage that problem. The Firehawk program is
16 one section of that, and it most certainly is an effective one.

17 SENATOR DAVIS: Okay. Does your agency attempt to
18 propagate the Firehawk program?

19 MR. PATTERSON: Our agency initially put the dollars
20 up for the initiation of the Firehawk program, to pilot test
21 the Firehawk program, and what it was, essentially was, is
22 seed money, which we've done with many of these programs to
23 initiate them, to see if, in fact, they were effective, to
24 take a package that -- of those effective programs and
25 distribute them.

26 Essentially, the Firehawk program has moved on even
27 more quickly than we'd hoped for in that it's got additional
28 funding and support from the private sector, which tends to

1 move it on on a nationwide basis. The program that was done
2 in Los Angeles County, we developed a number of informational
3 brochures and booklets that related to that program, they
4 were distributed and shared with people across the country,
5 and many places across the country picked that up, used that
6 program if they felt it was appropriate for their area.

7 SENATOR DAVIS: I guess the reason I'm asking these
8 questions is that I always thought as a policeman that if you
9 could work in the area of prevention, that the payoff is
10 always larger than working at arrests and prosecutions when
11 people get older. It would seem like the Firehawk program
12 would be a crime prevention thing against arson, that would
13 deserve some proselyting on the part of your agency.

14 In other words, even though it's growing rapidly,
15 it still covers only a small microcosm of American society.

16 MR. PATTERSON: I differ with you in that -- in
17 your evaluation --

18 SENATOR DAVIS: Does it cover a large -- what
19 percentage of the population is serviced by a Firehawk program?

20 MR. PATTERSON: Obviously, I'd have to let the
21 Firehawk program people share that with you, but there are
22 chapters that are being expanded all over the country, and
23 it's my understanding it's a nationwide program now for those
24 agencies, and those departments, those cities that want to
25 participate in it.

26 SENATOR DAVIS: I have 22 states, and more than
27 that individual departments, but if you looked at the whole
28 percentage, you know, what percentage that is of the population

1 of the country, it may be as little as five percent. I'm
2 guessing now, I don't know.

3 MR. PATTERSON: Senator --

4 SENATOR DAVIS: I can ask --

5 DR. GAYNOR: I'm not quite sure what percent is
6 covered right now by the Firehawk program. I know that
7 certain statistics like the average size of an affiliate
8 covers about 350,000 people, and that we're expanding so
9 rapidly, it's a little hard to keep track of our records.
10 But we could use all the support from the private and public
11 sectors that --

12 SENATOR DAVIS: So it covers one and a half percent
13 of the population, something like that?

14 DR. GAYNOR: Yeah. Hopefully someday we'll --

15 SENATOR DAVIS: Okay. All I'm doing is saying,
16 you know, you can be a good propaganda agent for it to
17 disseminate it further.

18 MR. PATTERSON: That's -- Senator, that's essentially
19 what part of my job is, to take the programs that we've
20 identified, that we've had participation in, that have been
21 successful, sharing those with other people. I think I'd
22 like to caution -- make a point of caution. One that the
23 Firehawk program, although it's successful, and appears to
24 be a good ongoing program, still ends up only being one very,
25 very small sector of the problem.

26 The other, that the Firehawk program, is it right
27 for every agency, and why I say that is that the agency has
28 to have an enthusiasm, and an interest, and recognize their

1 problem before they'll participate in it. So just -- you have
2 to have the right people and the right timing to initiate
3 this program, just as we do with a variety of others.

4 SENATOR DAVIS: Well, that's why it needs more
5 enthusiastic people pushing it.

6 MR. PATTERSON: I'm enthusiastic, and that's our
7 plight. Thank you, Senator.

8 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you, Bill. Our next
9 witness is Chief Richard Bosted from Riverside Fire Department.
10 He's also representing the California Fire Chiefs Association,
11 and WeTIP, and Chief, we're going to get you on the freeway
12 before 3:00 o'clock. Heading east, you want to be on that
13 freeway before 3:00 o'clock.

14 CHIEF BOSTED: You bet.

15 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: So do I.

16 CHIEF BOSTED: Senator Campbell, Senator Davis, and
17 ladies and gentlemen, my presentation is going to be short,
18 and I want to preface my response to the four points that
19 were indicated in your letter of invitation to speak by
20 indicating that I believe that the State Legislature in recent
21 years has responded to the requests of the fire service in a
22 constructive way.

23 The increase in penalties for the crime of arson,
24 as well as redefining the actual Penal Code sections dealing
25 with the crime have been beneficial to our objectives. It's
26 become easier for our investigators to file charges on
27 perpetrators, and easier also to obtain the cooperation needed
28 from the district attorneys in the State of California to help

1 in the prosecution phase of this crime.

2 Additionally, I believe that the increased penalties
3 for the crime of arson in many cases have served to deter
4 would be arsonists, and we're talking about those adults that
5 perpetrate those crimes in most cases. I believe that those
6 facts are partially, and I go back to what Bill just said, to
7 know that it's got to be a -- there has to be a multimedia
8 effort to control the crime of arson, and I believe we've
9 done some wonderful things in the just past couple of years.

10 I believe that these facts and the help from the
11 State Legislature is partially responsible for the overall
12 downturn of the incidence of arson crimes in the State of
13 California.

14 I've talked with the members of the Board of
15 Directors of the California Fire Chiefs as recently as a week
16 ago last Friday, and asked them, and they're 13 fire chiefs
17 from all over the State of California, what their impressions
18 are, and what this legislative committee could do to assist
19 us in controlling the crime of arson.

20 The interesting thing is that they're all experiencing
21 the same kind of a downturn. I'd like to think that in
22 Riverside, it's because of what we're doing locally. But I
23 think that we're experiencing this downturn all over the
24 state, and you're partially responsible for it as legislators
25 in redefining those Penal Code sections.

26 Now, in response to some of the specific points you
27 made in your letter of invitation, and although our juvenile
28 firesetters are still a problem in California, we've experienced

1 a reduced incident rate during the past year, as well as other
2 arson fires generally. I think it's also due to the juvenile
3 counseling programs that exist today, which are, by the way,
4 I think woefully inadequate in terms of their availability,
5 and I'll get to that in a minute.

6 To assist, I think, in continuing and accelerating
7 this reduction in crime. I think now that we're on the
8 offensive, I think now is the time to redouble our efforts,
9 because the strides that we've made, and Chief Davis --
10 Senator Davis mentioned that prevention has got to be worth
11 a pound of cure, and I believe that too. I think that the
12 prevention doesn't show up in statistical evidence the way
13 that we'd like it to so that we could redouble our efforts
14 and pump out a certain number of dollars at the end of the
15 trail.

16 Because what happens is, as you know, in municipal
17 governments throughout the State of California, when the
18 problem goes away, they stop spending money on it, and when
19 that happens, why we're going to have a return to the old
20 statistics again, unless we remain diligent.

21 So I think that in accelerating this reduction in
22 crime, that if we had a central clearinghouse in California,
23 or a computer, if you will, for the storing of arson information,
24 that it would be an investigative asset. This type of a tool
25 has been recommended for some years by the fire service, and
26 I believe that the time has come for this technology to be
27 utilized.

28 This clearinghouse, if you will, could be established

1 in the Office of the State Fire Marshal if funding were made
2 available to do so. Again, I believe, as many of our previous
3 speakers today have stated, that public education has the most
4 promising prognosis for dealing directly with the crime of
5 arson. WeTIP, you know, which is an acronym for We Turn In
6 Pushers, began in 1972 as a drug abuse mitigation program in
7 the West San Gabriel Valley that expanded in 1978 to accept
8 anonymous information on all major crimes.

9 At that time, if I remember right, Senator Davis
10 was at that press conference that day, and we asked the
11 founder/director of WeTIP if he'd be willing to accept arson
12 as a major crime, because you know, at that time, the FBI
13 hadn't yet seen fit to do so, and Ed Davis and Bill Brownell
14 both agreed that would be a good idea. That began our
15 statewide war on arson through WeTIP.

16 If you've been paying attention to the latest
17 television reports, you'll recognize that that's now a
18 national program. In fact, Chicago, Illinois is doing their
19 best to unseat KABC, WLS TV in Chicago is trying to unseat
20 KABC in Los Angeles as the top rated news program in the
21 nation, and KABC in Los Angeles admits readily that it was
22 the WeTIP program that put them in that spot.

23 So I love to see that kind of competition, and they
24 highlight various arson crimes on that program from time to
25 time, and even though they don't all generate the kinds of
26 tips that result in arrests and convictions, I believe that
27 that kind of highlighting does create a deterrent.

28 Finally, in your fourth point, psychological

1 motivations that develop in juveniles from broken homes, or
2 one parent homes implies that the parents must become part
3 of the counseling program. Investigators generally do not
4 have the necessary counseling skills and need someone to
5 refer these firesetting juveniles to in addition to the
6 judicial system.

7 So at any rate, that finishes my comments, and I
8 would be happy to answer any questions if my voice will hold up.

9 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: I have some cough drops here,
10 Dick, if you need them. I'd be delighted to share.

11 Ed, any questions?

12 SENATOR DAVIS: No.

13 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, and we
14 will get you on the freeway before 3:00 o'clock.

15 CHIEF BOSTED: All right, pyromania, I have to
16 respond to -- if I can hold up just a second more. Many
17 psychologically maladjusted juveniles that start fires don't
18 do so for sexual gratification, but receive sexual gratifica-
19 tion subsequently. The fire is started for other motivation,
20 such as vandalism, or revenge, or spite, and the sexual
21 gratification comes as another part later. That's the results
22 of the research that I did on it, because it's always bandied
23 about, as you say, Senator, and I've heard it for many years
24 too. Thank you.

25 SENATOR DAVIS: Thank you.

26 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you. Wayne Tyson from the
27 -- an arson specialist with Aetna Casualty Company. Mr. Tyson.

28 MR. TYSON: Thank you. I came with a list of

1 statistics and problems, and profiles, and I've heard everybody
2 give all the information I was going to use today, so I'm
3 going to skip over that.

4 I've been listening to previous speakers, I've
5 heard their ideas on statistics, problems, the juvenile
6 problem, and so forth, and I understand, and I agree with them,
7 and as I mentioned, I'm not going to throw any more statistics
8 and so forth your direction, because I'm sure during the
9 previous day you've heard almost all of them.

10 The one thing that I would like to mention, and
11 speaking for an insurance company, and I'm the only one that's
12 been here today speaking for the insurance company and their
13 problem. One statistic you ought to remember, it's the
14 consumer, not big business, that is suffering as a result of
15 the arson fires.

16 Twenty percent of all insurance premiums are used
17 to offset the expense of arson as we know it now. I'm also
18 probably the only person in this room who has experience on
19 both sides of the field. I started with Prince Georges County,
20 Maryland as a firefighter, and then for eight years I was on --

21 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: I thought you were going to say
22 you started as an arsonist.

23 MR. TYSON: No I started -- I should. I was a
24 firefighter, and then I spent eight years on the arson bomb
25 squad in Prince Georges County, Maryland, and now I'm on the
26 other side of the fence in the insurance business. As a result,
27 I've seen both sides of the fence, the problems that the fire
28 departments are experiencing, and the problems that we are

1 experiencing as an insurance industry.

2 Aetna has been a forerunner of all the insurance
3 companies in the fact that we recognize the arson problem,
4 and it is a large major problem in the United States, and we
5 are trying to do our part to put a stop to it, and to combat
6 it. We're one of the first companies, as I said, that are
7 aware of the arson problem, much less the juvenile arson
8 problem. We are experiencing problems with that also.

9 As I said, we realize that the problem exists.
10 We're trying to do our part to fight it, and so are a lot of
11 other companies, and the only thing that I want to mention,
12 being as everybody's covered all the ideas I wanted to have is
13 that we have gone out and done materials that are available,
14 such as what you saw today with Sesame Street, and so forth,
15 that Aetna has produced, and printed, and has given out free
16 of charge, hundreds of thousands of this booklet, which was
17 written by our Director, Mr. John Barracotto, which I will
18 leave with you.

19 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you.

20 MR. TYSON: We have just come out with a printing on
21 the Aetna arson prevention series, four various booklets,
22 one is Detecting Arson; one is Preventing Arson Epidemics,
23 The Role of Early Warning Strategies; and one is Organizing
24 of Staffing, Administration of the Arson Investigation Unit;
25 but the fourth one here is A Juvenile Firesetter and School
26 Arson Prevention Programs. We do mention the Firehawks in this
27 book.

28 But the fact that we have printed these, and we

1 have recognized that it is a serious problem, it's one that
2 we're going to have to face more and more everyday, and as a
3 result, I just appreciate the few minutes that you've allowed
4 me to speak here today, and to give you a chance, if there's
5 anything we can do with you as an industry, feel free.

6 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you.

7 MR. TYSON: Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Mr. Tyson, thank you very much,
9 we appreciate your being here. Our final witness will be
10 Chuck Edwards representing the Arson Investigators. Mr. Edwards.

11 MR. EDWARDS: Senator Campbell, Senator Davis, I'm
12 with the California Conference of Arson Investigators. We're
13 an organization that has fire, police, insurance, public
14 utilities and private investigators. We're also concerned in
15 the juvenile firesetters.

16 We agree with the previous speakers. The Firehawk
17 is a very good program, and in leaving, I want to get out of
18 here at 3:00 too -- and in leaving, with Senator Davis'
19 comment about POST, you will be receiving a letter from us
20 requesting some help with that. Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Edwards.
22 Is there anybody else who wishes to testify this afternoon,
23 and take us beyond the 3:00 p.m. deadline that I've established?

24 (No audible response.)

25 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: If not, I thank you all very much
26 for your appearance, and for your testimony, and your help and
27 assistance. We look forward to seeing you again soon.

28 Thank you. This meeting stands adjourned.

(Whereupon the hearing was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.)

