

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE PRESIDENT: And now what happens?

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

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

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

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

SHERIFF AUBREY: Thank you, sir.

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

PARTICIPANT: Absolutely, yeah.

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

PARTICIPANT: No.

THE PRESIDENT: It's like some things --

PARTICIPANT: No sense.

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

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

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

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

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

PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

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

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

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

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

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, that's great.

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

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

THE PRESIDENT: Can you believe that?

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

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