



LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION PARTNERSHIP

ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

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Date: March 30, 2023

Re: Law Enforcement Supports Community-Based Violence Intervention DOJ
Funding

To: House CJS Subcommittees

Dear Distinguished Chair Rogers and Ranking Member Cartwright,

Having spent our careers serving this great country as police, judges, prosecutors, and corrections officials, we have witnessed the damage done by our gun violence epidemic. We feel a duty to speak out in support of interventions that can stem the tide of this violence. The Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) asks you to consider appropriating \$200 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 for the Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative, administered by the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP). This investment will provide valuable new tools to assist law enforcement in stemming the recent rise of violence across our nation.

We have seen gun violence destroy families and neighborhoods firsthand. Each year, the U.S. suffers around 120,000 non-fatal firearm injuries.¹ In addition to the casualties, this violence creates lifelong physical and mental health impairments, fractured families, and an estimated \$557 billion in costs annually.²

Any police officer can tell you that violence is extremely concentrated. In any city, a small percentage of streets see the vast majority of homicides,³ and a tiny percentage of individuals are repeat perpetrators and victims of shootings.⁴

As law enforcement, we often know who these individuals are in our communities. However, when shootings occur, we often do not have the evidence necessary to prosecute the perpetrators. We are caught trying to react after the fact, and we are not able to do enough to prevent future shootings.

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In recent years, cities around the country have learned to intervene preventively with the small group of individuals caught in the cycle of violence through community-based violence intervention programs. Instead of being confined to making threats, conducting surveillance, and waiting until another act of violence occurs, these cities are directly intervening in changing the life path of these young people. In Omaha, Nebraska, a violence intervention and prevention partnership between law enforcement and community members helped contribute to a [74% decrease](#) in gun violence from 2008 to 2018. In the years 2017 and 2019, Omaha saw the lowest number of gun assaults in nearly 20 years. Interventions with the highest-risk individuals in Richmond, California helped reduce homicides by more than 50 percent for ten years.⁵ Outreach programs in New York City are associated with up to 60% reductions in violence in targeted neighborhoods.⁶ In Baltimore and other cities, Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs have reduced clients' subsequent risk of shooting by more than 60 percent.⁷ In Oakland, a partnership of community members, social service providers, and law enforcement helped reduce shootings by 50% over five years.⁸ In Newark, the Newark Community Street Team helped decrease violence by double digits.⁹

As individuals from across the political spectrum, we are united in our belief that investing in these programs nationwide would produce a significant and lasting public safety benefit to our nation. By empowering community members to help law enforcement shoulder the burden of public safety, this new approach would also increase community trust in and collaboration with law enforcement.

As law enforcement from across the nation, we all agree that stopping violence is one of our greatest needs as a society. We urge you to make this critical investment to add to our public safety toolbelt and do everything we can to protect our communities from violence. Thank you for your attention to this crucial issue.

Respectfully,

Lt. Diane Goldstein (Ret.)
Executive Director
Law Enforcement Action Partnership

Dwayne Crawford, Executive Director
National Organization of Black Law Enforcement
Executives

Chief Vincent E. DeMaio
Clinton Police Department, Connecticut

Sheriff Tim Cameron
St. Mary's County, Maryland

George F. Kain, Ph.D.
Police Commissioner, Town of Ridgefield, CT
Professor and Chairman, Division of Justice and
Law Administration Program
Western CT State University

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Sedgwick County Sheriff's Department
Wichita, Kansas

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San Diego Sheriff's Department, CA

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Oregon Department of Corrections

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Milwaukee Police Department, WI

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Yale University Police Department
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Hayward, CA Police Department Former Director
Department of Justice COPS Office

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Contra Costa County, CA

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Tampa Police Department
City of Tampa, FL

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Marshalltown Police Department
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Miamisburg Police Department, OH
Former Chief, Kettering Health Network Police
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District Attorney Michael Dougherty
Boulder County, CO

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Chicago Police Department, IL

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Salina Police Department, KS

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Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department, MI

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Whitaker Police Department, PA

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United States Probation Officer Specialist
Loretto, PA

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Former Police Officer
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Det. Justin Boardman (Fmr.)
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Lt. Fred Martens (Ret.)
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Deputy Sheriff Eric Kollwitz
Gunnison County, CO

Eric E. Sterling
Former Assistant Counsel, Subcommittee on
Crime, U.S. House Judiciary Committee
Chair, Policing Advisory Commission,
Montgomery County, MD
Silver Spring, MD

Major Neill Franklin (Ret.)
Maryland State Police
Baltimore, MD

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Cheshire County Department of Corrections
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Allison Watson
Former Assistant District Attorney
13th Judicial District of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN

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Seattle Police Department, WA

Terry Blevins
Former Sergeant and Terrorism Liaison Officer
Gila County, Arizona Sheriff's Office
Former Security Advisor
US Dept of Defense and Dept of State

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Howard City, MI

Sheriff James Manfre (Ret.)
Flagler County Sheriff's Office, FL

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Sebastopol, CA

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Plainfield Police Department, CT

Maj. Mike Hilliard (Ret.)
Baltimore Police Department
Baltimore, MD

Sgt. Paul Steigleder (Ret.)
Clackamas County Sheriff's Office
Wemme, OR

Officer David Doddridge (Ret.)
Los Angeles Police Department, CA
Viroqua, WI

Officer Patrick Heintz (Ret.)
Corrections Officer, Substance Abuse Counselor
Hampden County Sheriff's Department
Agawam, MA

Capt. Leigh Maddox (Ret.)
Maryland State Police
Baltimore, MD

Captain Tawana Rollins
Police Division, Newark, NJ

Former Assistant Prosecutor R. David Brown
Baton Rouge, LA

Sergeant Joe Jeanette (Ret.)
Bellevue Police Department, Nebraska

Chief Betty Frizzell (Ret.)
Winfield Police Department, MO
Lynnwood, WA

Former Senior Special Agent David Long
U.S. Dept of Labor's Office of Inspector General
San Francisco, CA

Carrie Roberts
Former Officer and Sheriff's Deputy
Colorado Department of Corrections
Parker, CO

Hon. Cylenthia LaToye Miller
Judge, Third Judicial Circuit Court
Family Division, Juvenile Section
Detroit, Michigan

Kenyen Brown
Former US Attorney
Southern District of Alabama

Judge Mary Helen Maynard (Ret.)
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Police Corporal Tim Hitt (Fmr.)
Monroe Police Department, LA

David Grise
First Assistant United States Attorney (Ret.)
Eastern District of Kentucky

Detective Melissa Rittenhouse (Fmr.)
Columbus Police Department, Indiana

Titus Peterson
Former Deputy District Attorney
5th Judicial District Colorado

Kevin Corey, Chief of Police (Ret.)
Lincoln Heights Police Department, OH

Robert Brown, Assistant Police Chief
Thomson Police Department, GA

Captain Carolyn Lewis (Ret.)
Department of Correction,
New York, NY

Senior Deputy Sheriff Michael A Griffin
Harris County Sheriff's Office, TX

Officer Jacqueline Smith (Ret.)
Atlanta Police Department, GA

Chief Lloyd Franklin, Sr.
Pine Bluff Police Department, AR

Captain Kellie Yates
Columbia Police Department, SC

Deputy Chief Reggie C. Cotton
Muskogee Police Department, OK

Special Agent Joseph A. McMillan (Ret.)
United States Air Force

Lt. John 'Jay' Hall (Ret.)
Houston Police Department, TX

District Attorney John Hummel
Deschutes County, Oregon

Captain Michael Harvey (Fmr.)
Spotsylvania, VA Sheriff's Office

Master Police Officer Dimitrios Mastoras (Ret.)
Arlington County Police Department

District Attorney Natasha Irving
District 6, Maine

Judge Gordon McAllister (Ret.)
District Court of Tulsa, OK

Michele Worobiec
President, National Alliance for Model State Drug
Laws

Senator Chris Gorsek, Ph.D.
State of Oregon

Officer David Franco (Ret.)
Chicago Police Department, IL

Petty Officer Larry Talley (Ret.)
United States Navy
Monument, CO

Attorney General Mr. Kimberly B. Cheney (Fmr.)
County State's Attorney, VT

Assistant Chief Kevin Hall
Tucson Police Department, AZ

Captain Donna Roman Hernandez (Ret.)
Caldwell Police Department, NJ

Captain James Davidsaver (Ret.)
Lincoln Police Department, NE

Dale R. Landry
US Army MP Operations NCO

Officer Vanessa Westley (Ret.)
Chicago, IL Police Department

Detective Deborah B. Ramsey (Ret.)
Baltimore Police Department, MD

Officer Silvestre Tanenbaum (Fmr.)
Carrollton Police Department, TX

U.S. Attorney Bill Nettles (Ret.)
District of South Carolina
Columbia, SC

Special Agent Ray Strack (Ret.)
Department of Homeland Security, Immigration
and Customs Enforcement
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Lt. Joanne Naughton (Ret.)
New York Police Department, NY

City Attorney Pete Holmes (Ret.)
Seattle, Washington

Deputy Chief Stephen Downing (Ret.)
Los Angeles Police Department, CA

Judge Leonard Frieling (Fmr.)
City of Lafayette, Colorado

Sheriff Sue Rahr (Ret.)
King County Sherrif's Office
Seattle, Washington

U.S. Attorney John Leonardo (Ret.)
District of Arizona

Chief Chris Magnus (Ret.)
Tucson Police Department, AZ

Endnotes

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