

**PREVENTION OF YOUTH AND GANG VIOLENCE**

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**HEARING**  
BEFORE THE  
**COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY**  
**UNITED STATES SENATE**  
ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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JUNE 13, 2005  
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PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

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## **PREVENTION OF YOUTH AND GANG VIOLENCE**

**MONDAY, JUNE 13, 2005**

UNITED STATES SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,  
*Washington, D.C.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:00 a.m., in the Kirby Auditorium, National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Hon. Arlen Specter, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Specter, Biden and Feinstein.

Also Present: Senator Santorum.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ARLEN SPECTER, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA**

Chairman SPECTER. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. The United States Senate Judiciary Committee will now proceed with our hearing on juvenile violence. This is a problem nationally of epidemic proportion, a very, very serious problem in this city of Philadelphia and in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Where we reside during the week, in Washington, it is the subject of daily headlines just as it has been here in this city.

We have a distinguished array of national witnesses today to focus on what are some of the programs which work and where our Federal resources ought to be directed. We're being joined here today by the distinguished Senator from California, Senator Dianne Feinstein, who has been a national leader on this subject and has introduced very important legislation which is now pending before the Judiciary Committee. My distinguished colleague Senator Santorum and I welcome Senator Feinstein and thank her for coming to Philadelphia this morning. We will be joined a little later by Senator Biden.

This is an issue which I have seen on the personal level for more than four decades going back to my days as an assistant district attorney and then district attorney. In the late 1960s, early 1970s, there was a race between Chicago and Philadelphia as to which city would have the most gang deaths. Those statistics, ominous as they were at that time, pale in significance with the current problems with juvenile violence.

In the first five months of this year there has been an enormous increase in juvenile violence with some 63 deaths recorded among those 24 years of age and younger, compared to 41 for the first five months of last year, an increase of, as you can note, of more than 50 percent. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania receives funding—

We are going to have to run the clock, whoever is in charge of the clock, because the Chairman gets five minutes like everybody else for an opening statement. I will estimate that I have used two-and-a-half minutes so we will maintain a parity of time. That is one of the difficult matters in Senate hearings, and that is keeping people on time. But I think it is worth noting that the Majority Leader has scheduled a vote this afternoon on Thomas Griffith for Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, so that we all have duties to be back in Washington and we are targeting a conclusion in advance of 12 o'clock. So we will be asking everybody, not only Senators but witnesses, to maintain the time limits.

But as I was in mid-sentence before noticing the absence of the clock running—the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania receives some \$160 million a year, and Senator Santorum and I on behalf of the Pennsylvania delegation are working coordinately with the Governor for an evaluation of what programs work and what programs do not work. The same evaluation is being made on the national level, and through the chairmanship of the Judiciary Committee we are going to be taking a close look on reauthorization as to which programs are going to be continued, because I am convinced that if we target our finances that we have a good chance to deal effectively with this problem. It is never going to be eliminated but it certainly can be reduced.

There is another significant dimension which is worth comment and that is that the Centers for Disease Control has now identified juvenile violence as a mental problem. I coordinately chair the Appropriations Subcommittee which funds the Centers for Disease Control and have talked to the director Dr. Gerberding with the view to perhaps targeting an earmark for this city or elsewhere in Pennsylvania, or elsewhere in the United States, to see to what extent the mental health issue may be a factor to be considered.

My time has expired so I am going to yield to the distinguished Senator from California, who has had a lot of experience in this field in her tenure as mayor of San Francisco, another wonderful city but a tough city on crime. Senator Feinstein, thank you for joining us. We look forward to your opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DIANNE FEINSTEIN, A U.S. SENATOR  
FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. If I may, I would like to enter into the record the statement of Senator Leahy, the ranking member of the Committee.

Chairman SPECTER. Yes, without objection, Senator Leahy's statement will be made a part of the record. He had wanted to join us here but could not because of a scheduling conflict. He is the ranking member of the Committee.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much. Thank you for holding this hearing, and I am delighted to be able to make it.

Criminal street gangs have grown over the past two decades from a local problem into a national crisis. Every day we read about a new tragedy where a gang member has shot a police officer as part of an induction ceremony, used a machete to murder an innocent victim, or tracked down and killed someone who may have witnessed a crime. There are reports of gangs actively recruiting el-

ementary schoolers seven and eight years old into the criminal enterprise. They must be stopped.

I would like to take a moment to outline the magnitude of the problem. It is estimated that there are 840,000 active gang members in the United States operating in every State of the Union. Ninety percent of our large cities with a population of over 100,000 report gang activity. And that is not the full extent of the problem.

In 2002, 32 percent of cities with a population of 25,000 to 50,000 reported a gang-related homicide. In California, my State, the most recent statistics available indicate that between 1992 and 2002—now listen to this, 7,851 people were killed in gang-related violence. In the first quarter of 2005, Los Angeles County alone reported 1,727 gang crimes. In 2003, nationally there were 115 gangland murders and 817 juvenile gang killings. Now this is organized crime with a 115 and juvenile gangs with 817. That gives you the ratio.

Youth gangs kill seven times as many people as so-called organized crime. In fact many street gangs are now highly organized, hierarchical corporations with boards of directors, governors and regional coordinators. The Los Angeles chief of police, Bill Bratton, has said this, “There is nothing more insidious than these gangs. They are worse than the Mafia. Show me a year in New York where the Mafia indiscriminately killed 300 people. You cannot.”

In recognition of this emerging, the FBI last month formed a nationwide task force to disrupt the organization of the notorious MS-13. This single gang operates in 33 States with an international membership in the hundreds of thousands. On Christmas Eve 2004, MS-13 members gunned down 28 commuters on a passenger bus in Honduras. The mastermind of that attack was arrested in Texas in February, so you see the international connection. This same gang is responsible for the brutal murder of a 17-year-old informant in Virginia. She was four months pregnant and stabbed 16 times in the chest and neck. I need not remind my colleagues of the wave of machete attacks perpetrated by MS-13 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Just as the RICO Act—that is the racketeering statutes—were needed to break up Mafia rings, I believe Federal and local law enforcement need a strong set of tools to combat violent gangs today. With my distinguished colleagues, Senators Hatch, Grassley, Kyl and Cornyn I have introduced S. 155, the Gang Prevention and Effective Deterrence Act of 2005. Its main point is to create a new type of crime by defining and criminalizing criminal street gangs. This recognizes the basic point of a street gang. It is more powerful, more dangerous than its individual members. Defeating gangs means recognizing what is dangerous about them and then making that conduct illegal. This bill does that.

First, it makes participation in a criminal street gang a Federal crime for the first time. And it defines a criminal street gang. The legislation also makes it a crime for a member of a criminal street gang to commit, conspire, or attempt to commit two or more predicate gang crimes, or to get another individual to commit a gang crime. The term gang crime is defined to include violent and other serious State and Federal felony crimes such as murder, maiming, manslaughter, kidnaping, arson, robbery, assault with a dangerous

weapon, obstruction of justice, carjacking, distribution and sale of a controlled substance, certain firearms offenses, and money laundering. And it criminalizes violent crimes in furtherance or in aid of criminal street gangs.

These two provisions are at the heart of this legislation. Armed with this new law, Federal prosecutors working in tandem with State and local law enforcement will be able to take on gangs, in much the same way as they did traditional Mafia families having been systematically destroyed by effective RICO prosecutions.

I was told I could take a few extra minutes since I came all this great distance.

Senator SANTORUM. I yield my time.

Chairman SPECTER. Senator Feinstein, I was about to give you as much time as you needed, but with that concession—

Senator FEINSTEIN. I do not want to be overbearing but I would like to finish.

Chairman SPECTER. Senator Santorum will have his time too. We will give you 20 seconds a mile.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much.

The Gang Prevention and Effective Deterrence Act is a comprehensive bill to increase gang prosecution and prevention efforts. The bill authorizes approximately \$750 million over the next five years to support Federal, State and local law enforcement efforts against violent gangs, including the funding of witness protection programs and for intervention and prevention programs for at-risk youth. In support of this effort the bill increases funding for Federal prosecutors and FBI agents to increase coordinated enforcement efforts against violent gangs.

In addition to enforcement, we have got to encourage community response to the gang problem. Gang members are increasingly seeking to silence those who step forward to incriminate them. Routine witness intimidation has given away to routine witness execution.

As an example, recent press reports from Boston show that gang members are distributing what is, in essence, a witness intimidation media kit, complete with graphics and CDs that warn potential witnesses that they will be killed. One CD depicts three bodies on its cover. In another incident a witness' grand jury testimony was taped to his home. Soon afterward he was killed. I believe it is vital to support those who speak out against the violence in their communities and this bill provides \$60 million to create and expand witness protection programs.

Most of all, we have got to keep our children and grandchildren out of these gangs. We must identify and fund successful community programs that stem gang recruitment and participation. Additionally, my bill would make it a felony to recruit a juvenile into one of these gangs.

Today we will learn from those on the front lines in the effort to combat crime and youth violence, how to best approach this issue, what works, what does not work, and how to combine effective law enforcement tools with workable prevention mechanisms. The bill authorizes \$250 million to make grants available for community-based programs to provide for crime prevention and intervention services for gang members and at-risk youth in areas des-

ignated as high intensity interstate gang activity areas. We must ensure that this funding is used wisely.

The bottom line is that this legislation would provide the tools and the resources to begin the national task of destroying criminal street gangs. It is designed to emphasize and encourage Federal, State, and local cooperation. It combines enforcement with prevention. It is a tough, effective and fair approach. For nearly 10 years now I have been working with my friend Senator Hatch on legislation to provide law enforcement with the tools it needs to prosecute, prevent and deter illegal gang activity. Last Congress we reached a bipartisan consensus and this committee reported our bill to the Senate floor favorably. Unfortunately, there was not enough time for the whole Senate to consider the bill.

So again, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for calling this hearing. We urge that there be a markup on this bill. We very much hope that you will join us as a co-sponsor, and we presented for the audience a pamphlet which I would like to urge you to take with you which describes the growth of gangs all throughout the United States. For example, Bloods and Crips began in one American city: Los Angeles. It is now in 120 American cities. Gangster Disciples began in Chicago. It is now in more than 33 cities. And on and on and on.

So I hope this proves helpful and I thank you very much for the time.

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Feinstein. I will be joining as a co-sponsor.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you; delighted.

Chairman SPECTER. And we will be putting the bill on our executive session to move it along for enactment.

I now turn to my distinguished colleague, Senator Rick Santorum. Rick and I have been closely watching the situation on national juvenile violence with special reference to what is happening in Pennsylvania and here in Philadelphia, and some time ago decided that it would be very useful if we came one day here for a hearing and invited colleagues, and I am pleased to turn to him now for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICK SANTORUM, A U.S. SENATOR FROM  
THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA**

Senator SANTORUM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much for holding this hearing. This is an important issue here in the city of Philadelphia and across the country. It is great that you could bring some of our best and brightest from around the country to address this issue.

Senator Feinstein, thank you too for being here today, and you can add my name as a co-sponsor to your legislation also. I had watched it last year and find that it, I think will be a very helpful contribution to the effort that we have before us.

Let me also thank the panelists for being here and again appreciate all the work that you have done in this area of gang violence, and violence and criminal justice in general.

As Senator Specter and Senator Feinstein both said, this is a problem that not just is confronting big cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles and Philadelphia, but has spread throughout the United States. There is not hardly any small town in America any-

more of any kind of size that does not have some sort of gang activity located. If there is any center of poverty in those communities there is likely to be gang activity. I think that points in large measure to some of the problems that we have confronting us. When you have hopelessness, when you have people who are disconnected, they seek to get connected, and in many cases, particularly for young males but increasingly, unfortunately, for young females also, they get connected to gang activity, to an organization that they feel some sense of belonging to.

We need to get at those root causes that Senator Specter talked about, as well as be very tough on those who are the recruiters and those who are the organizers of these gangs, as Senator Feinstein has talked about. So we need to both look at prevention as well as attack the problem that exists today.

The area that I have focused on quite a bit is on the prevention side, which I think goes to anti-poverty programs and programs that help strengthen families. The fact is that you are three times more likely to be in a gang if you were raised in a home without a father in the home. That to me is a pretty good indicator that we need to do something to strengthen the role of fathers in our families.

Senator Bayh and I have worked together on a national fatherhood initiative program, everything from taking fathers who are released from prison to try to mentor them and help them to try to reunify them with their families so they can be a positive influence on their children, to the President's healthy marriage initiative to try to, before the child is even born, trying to stabilize and to assist those families that are in the making, if you will, so fathers do not separate from the mother of their child and stay and participate, whether in marriage or whether just in a way that they are connecting to their children. To me, it is obvious from the statistics as well as common sense that that is a severe problem that leads to not just gang problems but a whole myriad of problems in our society, and that we have some role, limited as it may be, some role in the Government to try to be helpful in that regard.

So I look forward to hearing the testimony today. I thank you again, Senator Specter, for holding this hearing in Philadelphia and tried to save a little time for you. I have got a minute and 26 seconds left to yield back to you.

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Santorum.

We now turn to our first witness, Ms. Sarah V. Hart, the distinguished Director of the National Institute of Justice where she has served since 2001. Prior to the time she was a delegate to the United Nations Crime Commission 2002 conference and a member of the National Academics of Science Roundtable on Terrorism. For six years from 1995 to 2001, she served as chief counsel for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and was a 16-year prosecutor in the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office. It goes to show you how time has flown because you were there after I was there, which is some time ago.

She has her bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Delaware and her law degree from Rutgers School of Law where she was an associate editor of the law review. So she brings

a background in Pennsylvania crime control and very extensive experience on the national level.

Thank you for joining us, Ms. Hart, and we look forward to your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF SARAH HART, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Ms. HART. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The National Institute of Justice is the research and development arm of the Department of Justice and our primary mission is to research criminal justice issues for State and local governments. Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, we are honored to be able to present research findings to you on this very important question, and it is also an honor to be here in my hometown of Philadelphia. Thank you.

The National Institute of Justice has a long history of supporting research relating to local efforts to reduce gun crime, especially among 18- to 30-year-olds. NIJ sponsored the Boston Ceasefire Project as well as similar efforts across other major cities. My written testimony provides detailed information about short-term and long-term strategies to address these issues. Given the time constraints of this hearing, my colleague Bob Flores of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention will focus on prevention strategies. I will primarily focus on interventions that reduce and disrupt violent crime and the questions posed by the Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, you asked from a national perspective what programs and other interventions have been successful. In the area of effective policing, comprehensive problem-solving strategies have proven to be effective. These approaches require a systematic analysis of the nature of the crime problem, a focus on geographic locations with high concentrations of crime, a focus on likely offenders, and community and criminal justice system coordination.

Because problem-solving approaches involve tailoring a response to the local problem, these are not a canned program. However, components of successful programs usually involve the following: crime mapping, much like you see here on a Philadelphia map; disruption of illegal gun markets; addressing illicit gun use; focus on particular gangs or focus on particular known offenders. Project Safe Neighborhoods incorporates many of these strategies.

Mr. Chairman, you also asked about the cost of successful programs and their potential impact. Problem-solving approaches usually involve numerous public and private entities that redirect existing resources. For this reason, it is often very difficult to parse out precise overall costs. But cost-benefit research suggests that the overall benefits to successful intervention programs clearly offset their anticipated costs. Some of the most effective programs can be very intensive and expensive, but the estimated long-term savings to taxpayers and crime victims can be substantial.

This research even tends to undervalue societal benefits. For example, current cost-benefit comparisons tend to undervalue the cost of crime. For example, they often do not consider community costs, such as crime-related declines in property values, loss in tax revenues when citizens will move out of a jurisdiction to avoid a crime

problem, private security costs that homeowners and businesses incur to harden targets against potential crime. In addition, there are often intangible costs such as pain and suffering of crime victims and lost opportunity costs.

Mr. Chairman, you have also asked about unsuccessful programs. Research has shown that a number of programs, including some very popular ones, are not effective. Some of these programs include the DARE program, traditional boot camps, gun buyback programs, and group therapy programs that often bring together delinquent youth where they can reinforce negative behaviors.

You also asked how the research can address Philadelphia's increased youth violence problem. The research supports a comprehensive approach like Project Safe Neighborhoods that targets high crime locations and likely offenders. Potential interventions should include homicide and violent incident reviews, chronic violent offender lists, gun violence case screenings by prosecutors, violent offender notification meetings, police probation teams, and prevention programs with proven effectiveness. In addition, current jurisdictions should look at their existing programs to see if they should be reevaluated in light of other successful programs.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, you asked me why some successful youth violence programs have become ineffective. In addition to economic incarceration issues, there are also legitimate questions about program sustainability. Oftentimes successful programs are victims of their own success. There is a reduced sense of urgency for the problem and it is harder to compete for scarce resources.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to speak here today and we would be happy to provide additional information to the Committee.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hart appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you, Ms. Hart. Your full statement will be made a part of the record, as will all of the statements.

We turn now to Dr. Ileana Arias, Acting Director for Centers for Disease Control's Injury Center since June of last year. She is responsible for the expansion of State programs for injury prevention, and new research in areas of child maltreatment. Prior to her appointment as acting director she was chief of the Division of Violence Prevention at CDC, and she had been director of clinical training and professor of clinical psychology at the University of Georgia in Athens. She has a bachelor's degree from Barnard, and an M.A. and a Ph.D., both in psychology, from the State University of New York.

Thank you for coming to Philadelphia today, Ms. Arias, and we look forward to your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF ILEANA ARIAS, ACTING DIRECTOR, NATIONAL CENTER FOR INJURY PREVENTION, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Ms. ARIAS. Good morning, Chairman Specter, Senator Feinstein, and Senator Santorum. Thank you very much for the opportunity to share the exciting work that CDC is doing to address the issue of youth violence in the United States.

Chairman SPECTER. Ms. Arias, would you pull the microphone just a little closer? Or as Senator Thurmond would say, pull the machine—

Ms. ARIAS. Is that better?

Chairman SPECTER. Senator Santorum says, he said, speak into the machine. We miss Senator Thurmond.

Ms. ARIAS. I am also very honored to join my colleagues from the Department of Justice to address the issue today. In addition to my warm greetings and thank you, I also bring you greetings from the director of CDC, Dr. Julie Gerberding.

Youth violence is a very important public health issue. Homicide, as a lot of us know, is the second leading cause of death among youth in America between the ages of 15 and 24. It is the leading cause of death among African-American youth between the ages of 15 and 34. And the problem does not stop with the deaths. Injuries severe enough for emergency department responses leading to long-term consequences and treatment are very common. In 2002, over 875,000 injuries resulted from violence against youth, and one out of 13 of those required hospitalization.

Injuries are the obvious consequences to youth violence. However, there are others that are significant and important as well. We know that youth violence is a precursor to a number of mental health and chronic health conditions like anxiety disorders, depression, asthma, headaches, and other kinds of problems that are usually associated with prolonged exposure to stress.

As difficult as it is to report these numbers, I do have some good news. We know that youth violence is preventable. At the CDC, we gather information on the impact and causes of youth violence and try to translate that information into what you can be done in order to prevent it. We know that early prevention and intervention are extremely critical in order to be successful in our efforts to prevent youth violence. We also know that the role of parents is equally critical in that effort. Experiencing and witnessing violence either in the home or the community is a significant risk factor. But we also know that there are significant factors that protect youth against violence, both against perpetration or victimization. Most importantly connectedness to family, to community, to schools, et cetera, has been and could show to significantly protect.

We have used this information to identify and disseminate programs that have been shown to be effective in reducing youth violence and preventing the significant consequences associated with it. The Resolving Conflict Creatively Project at Columbia University that is being conducted by members of the Academic Centers of Excellence have shown that not only is the program effective in increasing pro-social behavior on the part of youth who participate, it is also effective in reducing violent behavior. Likewise, Peace Builders, which was developed in Arizona to deal with very young children, that is K-5 equally have shown that it is possible to increase pro-social patterns of behavior among children and decrease violence, including injuries associated with that violence.

We have recognized via home visitation programs can be very effective in reducing child abuse. In fact, 40 percent reduction in child abuse associated with families who have been recipients of those programs; child abuse, which is a significant precursor to

youth violence. More importantly, we recognize the importance of communities deciding what it is that they need to do in order to prevent the problem of youth violence in their communities appropriate to the conditions that face them.

In order to address that issue we have published Best Practices for Youth Violence Prevention, a source book for community action, that presents a number of different strategies that can be adopted by a community on the basis of expert opinion that can be effective in reducing youth violence. The practices included run the gamut from individually focused practices to community interventions that rely on the collaboration community organizations, faith-based organizations, et cetera.

Youth violence is a complex problem best addressed in a very comprehensive way. We recommend that efforts to address youth violence begin early in infancy and continue through adolescence, involving schools, community and faith-based organizations, public health, social services, criminal justice and families.

In conclusion, I would like to say that CDC has been committed to addressing the issue of youth violence. We remain committed to that effort, bringing the expertise and the strengths of the public health perspective to prevent youth violence. In conclusion, thank you very much for the ability and the opportunity to share what it is that we have been working on and again expressing our continued interest in continuing to address the issue of youth violence across the Nation. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Arias appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much, Ms. Arias.

We have been joined by our distinguished colleague, Senator Joseph Biden, from Delaware. Senator Biden, first elected in 1972 at the age of 29, has served as Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, now as ranking member of Foreign Relations, had been Chairman of Foreign Relations, and is really a national spokesman on matters of international affairs.

Senator Biden, we yield to you for an opening statement.

Senator BIDEN. I will wait till just before the second panel. I do not want to interrupt this panel. I thank you very much though, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Biden. Then we will proceed with the testimony of Mr. J. Robert Flores who is the Administrator of the Office of Justice Programs in the Department of Justice for juveniles. Before that appointment, in 2002 he was vice president and senior counsel of the National Law Center for Children and Families, had been senior trial attorney in the Department of Justice in the Obscenity Section where he prosecuted the first case involving computer child pornography to go to trial. He has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Boston University and his doctorate in law from the Boston University School of Law.

Thank you for joining us, Mr. Flores, and we look forward to your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF J. ROBERT FLORES, ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE & DELINQUENT PREVENTION, OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Mr. FLORES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee. I am really pleased to have an opportunity to be here today and to testify about the current state of violence and juvenile crime in our major cities.

I want to emphasize that OJJDP, the office that I head, advocates and employs a comprehensive approach to addressing juvenile justice problems with the goal of providing today's kids with opportunities for a better tomorrow. We recognize that here in the city of Philadelphia citizens have been faced with the tragic reality of innocent children being caught in crossfires. In preparation for today's hearing I have taken a close look at the juvenile arrest data for Philadelphia County. As with the national numbers, the overall arrest rates for juvenile violent crime have gone down since 1993. However, between 2001 and 2004, the most recent number that we have, there have been increases in juvenile arrests in some key areas, including aggravated assault, robbery, weapons law violations, and murder. In fact the rates nearly doubled during those years with regard to weapons law violations and murders.

While all of the rates are still far below the 1993 rates, these recent increases emphasize the importance of our continued attention to juvenile violence. Other cities like Philadelphia are also experiencing the pain of burying children due to similar circumstances, and oftentimes these harsh and unacceptable crimes leave communities with a sense of hopelessness. Today I want to provide you with a national snapshot of current information on efforts our agency has in place, both here in Philadelphia and throughout the Nation, to address this issue.

Through violence evaluation we have advanced our knowledge substantially about what leads to juvenile violence and delinquency. We also know something about how to prevent and address it. Violence prevention and intervention efforts hinge on the identification of risk and protective factors, and the determination of when they emerge during child development. Since 1996, OJJDP has sponsored longitudinal studies on the causes and correlates of delinquency, which are designed to improve understanding of serious delinquency, violence, and drug use by examining how individual juveniles develop within the context of family, school, peers, and communities. I have to underscore the importance of being able to do that research and the important information that that research leads to.

Early warning signs of disruptive behaviors must not be dismissed. Rather than assuming that these behaviors will pass, teachers, parents, and mental health practitioners need to recognize that the research clearly shows that disruptive behavior should be taken seriously. Interventions are more successful if the child has not already begun moving along pathways towards more serious delinquent activity.

Through a grant to the National Center for Juvenile Justice in Pittsburgh, OJJDP compiles a complete set of informational data pertaining to the juvenile justice field. The substantial growth in

juvenile violent crime arrests that began in the late 1980s peaked in 1994. In 2003, juvenile arrests for violence were the lowest since 1987, and juvenile arrests for property crimes were the lowest in three decades. A very small percentage of juveniles commit these violent and property crimes. If one assumed that each arrest involved a different youth, which is unlikely, then about one-third of 1 percent of all juveniles age 10 to 17 living in the U.S. were arrested for a violent crime. The proportion of property crime offenses resolved by the police that involved juveniles in 2003 was about 20 percent, the lowest level since 1980.

If we take a look at the things that we can apply from the research that we have done, we realize that clearly one of the things that has to happen is that we have to provide some comprehensive efforts to address some of the needs of these kids. We have invested substantially at the University of Colorado in Boulder at the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence in taking a look at what programs work. We call it the Blueprints Project. That project is a way of taking a look, a very hard look at programs to see whether or not not only do they deliver on what they say they will show and do, but also whether or not those programs can be replicated across the country. It is a very rigorous review, and after taking a look at nearly 600 programs the Blueprints Initiative identified 11 model programs and 21 promising programs.

As demonstrated by these model and promising programs, prevention is one of the most cost-effective methods for reducing juvenile delinquency. Through the Title V community prevention grants and the juvenile family drug courts, we are also providing services and evaluating the impact of focusing on the promotion of healthy childhood development.

I want to underscore also that through the coordinating council and the work that is being done now in the OJJDP gang reduction pilot programs we are working with our colleagues at HHS, at HUD, at Labor, with our other components, with sister agencies like NIJ and BJA so that we are not leaving this just to the Justice Department's budget, just to the Justice Department's resources but really taking a look at making sure that we bring all of the resources that Congress has provided to bear to address this very significant problem.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Flores appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much. Mr. Flores.

Senator Biden, would you care to make your statement or in advance of the second panel?

Senator BIDEN. No, I will wait.

Chairman SPECTER. Then we will now proceed to our customary questioning by members of the panel by the Senators, each of which is within a five-minute time parameter.

Ms. Hart, you testified about group therapy and about an evaluation of programs related to drug addiction. I attended a program on group therapy many years ago at Swan Lake where they had ex-drug addicts with a group of 10 people in counseling, with sessions which ran all night for a very protracted period of time. I would be interested in your evaluation as to, if you are familiar with what happened at Swan Lake, how successful that has been

on the national level. I know it has been copied at Cadencia House which originated here in the Philadelphia suburbs and is now of national import.

Ms. HART. Mr. Chairman, I am not familiar with that particular program but we would be very happy to go back and look and provide the Committee with additional information that we may have on that.

Chairman SPECTER. With respect to the addictive programs, that is a subject which we have examined in the Subcommittee on Health and Human Services over many years. Are there really reliable statistics to tell us what programs on curing addiction, alcoholism or drugs are really successful?

Ms. HART. I believe we have some information on that. There obviously is wide variation in different types of drug treatment. Some are more effective than others.

But one of the things that we definitely know is the very close link between criminal behavior and drugs and the need to invest in appropriate to drug treatment to reduce crime.

Chairman SPECTER. Ms. Arias, I am fascinated by the approach of the Centers for Disease Control in some conversations with Dr. Gerberding who is the director as to the impact of mental health on juvenile violence. Could you expand on what is the thinking of CDC as to the causal connection there, if any?

Ms. ARIAS. CDC is committed to addressing issues of mental health, as you know, both—

Chairman SPECTER. Speak into the machine, Ms. Arias.

Ms. ARIAS. CDC is committed to looking at mental health issues, both in terms of mental health as a precursor to youth violence and youth violence then producing or leading to mental health problems. There is a significant association there. There is, unfortunately, a very high rate of violence among children who have been diagnosed with having a psychiatric disorder, and equally likely for children who have been exposed both as perpetrators and/or victims to be at very high risk for developing those disorders over time.

The issue for us is trying to identify what are the common factors in both the development of psychiatric disorders and development of youth violence in order to address those issues as early on as possible in order to both. So that by identifying what are the common risk factors, what are the common protective factors, what we hope to do is create a situation where we do not have to then come up with interventions later on after a child has developed either a psychiatric disorder and/or a violent behavior pattern.

Chairman SPECTER. This is a subject we are going to want to pursue with you and we may do so on our subcommittee hearings on health and human services.

Mr. Flores, you talk about prevention as the most cost effective and you refer to the 11 model programs with 21 promising programs after reviewing over some 600 programs. What are the common elements of the programs which work?

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Chairman, a couple of the common elements are, one, that the process of implementation is very clear. These programs have taken the time to really document what they do, to make sure that they have identified those things which are critical

and have to be repeated, and that they have a very clear method of operation, so that it is not left—

Chairman SPECTER. What are the factors identified as critical?

Mr. FLORES. Let us take Big Brothers-Big Sisters for example. That is one of the model programs. One of the things that we know is that while mentoring is an incredibly important and very positive program, if it is carried out without the proper support and if it lasts less than six months the results are sometimes worse than if the mentoring did not take place at all. One of those is probably common sense.

Chairman SPECTER. Are you familiar with the program called GEAR UP which Congressman Fattah originated which has been funded by the subcommittee for about \$2 billion over the last six years which focuses on mentoring?

Mr. FLORES. I am only familiar with the fact that we are funding that, Senator. I can get you additional information.

Chairman SPECTER. You are not funding it. We are funding it.

Mr. FLORES. I understand that.

Chairman SPECTER. That is an important distinction. My time is up.

Senator Feinstein.

Do you want to add something, Mr. Flores, in defense of who is funding what?

Mr. FLORES. No, sir.

Chairman SPECTER. Very wise.

Senator Feinstein.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was very interested in the testimony.

Let me give you my observation. I think a lot begins very early in life in school. Youngsters cannot socialize, they cannot connect to the rest of the class. Generally it is all right up to about grade four, and then the emotional dropping out takes place, and by grade seven and eight they are ready for something that adds to their life. That is where the early gang recruiters come in.

In two of your papers you discuss two projects. One is the Pathways to Assistance here in Philadelphia, an OJJDP funded program, and the other is a program K-5 in Arizona, CDC funded, Peace Builders, both of which it seems to me try to deal with the problem of the school youngster who really cannot connect to anything meaningful in their life. I am wondering if you could speak more about this as an issue.

On one level you get the Columbine youngsters, which probably have two parents. Nonetheless, they went through all of the machinations they went through. Then you have youngsters who really do not have much parenting, who never learn basic values at home who come into the school system. It seems to me, regretfully, that schools are charged with doing more and more and more for youngsters. But there is this critical dimension and the only word I know is socialization, and I do not like the word. But there needs to be more mechanisms in elementary school to see that that is achieved, whether it is Big Brother or GEAR UP or Big Sister, but programs which can drive a positive sense of value and connect youngsters to each other.

Could you comment on that, anyone? Mr. Flores, let us begin with you and go right down the line.

Mr. FLORES. One of the things that we do find is extremely helpful are afterschool programs, things that allow these kids to really connect outside the normal school day. They really provide a tremendous motivation. It is an opportunity for teachers, volunteers, the people who run those programs to really connect. It is really the same basis that we believe that mentoring works so well, and that is it puts an adult into the life of the child as a resource, somebody to connect to.

We have an opportunity, because we have developed really good assessment tools at different ages, and now we have assessment tools that can really be used at very early ages to identify some of the places where these kids probably will face some challenges. We will be working with HHS to talk about how we can use those assessment tools to better effect, to really gather some of that information early. It is said that teachers typically know after just a few days who the children are in their class who really have some educational deficits and some problems at home. We want to be able to take advantage of that information.

So I would say that most of these programs here that we find to be extremely helpful address a multiple of these challenges that these kids have and really try to either connect them to the school, to the community or back to their family.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Start at what age?

Mr. FLORES. I think, quite frankly, we should looking at Head Start ages and on up. Why would we want to wait? So I think we are having those conversations already between the Administration for Children and Families in our office as to what kinds of assessment tools are there, what can we build, what kind of resources and volunteering can we bring to the table.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Dr. Arias?

Ms. ARIAS. Senator Feinstein, that is an excellent observation and I thank you for raising that. As mentioned in the testimony, and you alluded to it, Peace Builders has been shown to be effective, both in changing the children and also the teacher's perception of the environment that those children are growing up in. It is a very interesting observation in that the other program that I mentioned, the resolving conflict creatively which is a K-8 program, also found significant effects. However, interestingly, the effects were not as great for the older children, suggesting that as early as possible that intervention—that is, before they actually get to that stage in seventh or eighth grade where they have already developed those patterns. So that early intervention is critical.

We rely on school programs because teachers are amenable, teachers are interested in helping out in dealing with the issue of youth violence. However, we are also currently conducting some work looking to see the extent to which we can further improve the benefits that kids get from those programs in school by adding a community component and by adding also a family component. We are looking forward to that data being available soon to be able to say the extent to which a more holistic approach is going to be the way to go.

Senator FEINSTEIN. So if this bill does pass and we have the funds, in my view it would make sense, and I do not know if you agree, to target the monies toward troubled schools as young as possible with children and combine it with mentoring programs very early on. Would you agree with that?

Ms. ARIAS. I would agree, and again focusing on the family and the broader community as a whole. I think the community has to also engage in and put into place procedures that are going to support what is being done in the school and what is being done at a family level.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you. Ms. Hart?

Ms. HART. I would just like to follow on what my colleagues have said but approach it from a slightly different perspective. From a societal perspective, if you are looking at what are the long term benefits of those early investments, we are looking after deterring people potentially from a life of crime. If one invests later, for example, let us suppose you invest when somebody is 45 or 50 years with prevention programs, you may be only deterring them from 10, 20 years of crime. But if you are talking about a 15-year-old, you are talking about a very, very significant criminal career. So from a cost-benefit analysis it certainly seems to make sense to invest money, if you can, on people that are likely to have the longer criminal careers, and also to the extent you can have appropriate tools for trying to figure out which ones of the juveniles are the highest risk and most likely to go into that criminal pathway.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Feinstein.

Senator Santorum.

Senator SANTORUM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just would like to pick up on where Senator Feinstein was headed because I agree with her that that is a very key area, at least from the testimony that I listened to. Senator Feinstein did not like the term socialization. I will borrow Robert Putnam's term, social capital. I think that is what we are talking about, the connectedness that we have to each other. That is, obviously from your testimony, Ms. Arias, is what is missing. They are not connected.

I think the remediation that Senator Feinstein is talking about in her legislation and some of the programs that you have defined here are good connecting kids to other healthy kids. Not just other groups, but healthy groups of kids, neighbors, faith communities, as well as maybe—this is where I am heading in the next direction—to their families. Because the other aspect that you talked about in your testimony is was that you have very low rates of delinquency when parents are engaged, when, obviously, the parents are not abusive, and then when parents are home when kids are home.

So maybe another area, if you can comment, are there programs out there that have been effective? This is an area where Government tends to fear to tread, and that is somewhat directly getting involved in the family situation. But are there programs out there that have been effective in helping parents do a better job of parenting so we do not do the remediation down the line outside of the home in the schools?

Ms. ARIAS. There are some programs currently that, or there are some programs that we have looked at and supported that have been shown to be effective in doing that. Then there are some that actually we are expanding and looking at as well.

So, for example, I mention home visitation programs that intervene very, very early on among high risk families have been shown to be effective in reducing child maltreatment for sure, and then down the line improving the quality of life for that family. We are also looking at programs currently that are looking at various levels of intervention, again looking at how it is that communities can support families in order to have them engage in those functional patterns of interaction that are necessary, including also schools in that intervention. So looking at different levels of dose, if you will, and see where it is that we can get the most benefit from.

For the record, I can send additional information about those projects that we are currently looking at and some of the ones that we have evaluated more critically.

Senator SANTORUM. I would like that information. Also if any of you have a component as to what, if any, of these programs have focused on communities of faith and whether there has been a faith-based intervention and the success of those vis-a-vis more traditional programs.

Ms. Hart, I would like to focus on—you mentioned four things that do not work: the DARE program, boot camps, gun buybacks, and group therapy, and I suspect that there is testimony in here as to why they do not work. But you mentioned Project Safe Neighborhood as a program that does work. Can you explain why the programs you mentioned failed and why Project Safe Neighborhood is successful?

Ms. HART. Project Safe Neighborhoods is really more of an approach as opposed to a particular program, and the concept behind Project Safe Neighborhoods is to go in and analyze a local problem. Much of what Senator Feinstein mentioned about how out in California they especially have a problem with Bloods and Crips and gangs, you may be in another jurisdiction where you do not see that exact problem; it has not arisen yet. Project Safe Neighborhoods contemplates the idea that crime is different in different locations and you need to be able to analyze the crime at that particular location, see how it is changing over time and be able to respond appropriately to those particular dynamics that are causing the crime problem.

Senator SANTORUM. And why these other programs have not worked, particularly the DARE program? That is a program as you travel around in schools you see quite a bit of.

Ms. HART. It is immensely popular. You see DARE license plates here in Pennsylvania even, and it is enormously popular. But there have been comprehensive evaluations of that and they have shown consistently that it does not work, and I would be very happy to provide them to you.

Senator SANTORUM. Thank you.

Finally, Mr. Flores, in reading your testimony it is actually a fairly good news story that you present in here on the reduction in youth violence. Is that a fair characterization of your testimony? And why do—summarize this—because you did not really get into

that in your testimony, that there has been a fairly dramatic decline overall in youth violence in America.

Mr. FLORES. I think that the picture is a positive one overall, in spite of the fact that we have some very serious challenges. One of the things I would point out is that when we collect data, the data points out that there are some hot spots in different communities and that the crime, as I did testify orally about the fact that when we look at the numbers, even if we assume that each of those crimes is committed by a different kid, you are talking about one-third of 1 percent of kids 10 to 17.

I think that we are in a position as adults and as communities to really take charge of that. I do not think that we have lost control by any means. I do think that a lot of the interventions are working. Congress has really provided a tremendous amount of support for Boys and Girls Clubs, for instance. These clubs serve as an anchor across the country in community after community. They provide tremendous opportunities, not only for the kids, but as you so correctly point out, for the parents to engage as well, to have a place where they can come in and they can see their children assisted in everything from schoolwork, extracurricular activities and sports.

So I do think that one of the major challenges though is the connection. How do we strengthen that connection? I think our kids are amazingly resilient, and I think that many of them when offered the opportunity really do seize upon it. I do think though that we are not always as competitive in some places as we ought to be for our children's affections in terms of really providing something that they are going to want to respond to, and I think we have some room for improvement there.

But I think that we have got a number of programs, we have volunteers stepping forward, the President's call has been really extremely positive in bringing volunteers to the table. And then the First Lady's effort really has been remarkable in terms of providing some focus into ways that we can help kids across the board. We have talked about the nurse practitioner program. We have got mentoring programs that are being pushed by faith-based communities, and we got a lot that is going on now with the fatherhood initiative in terms of really challenging men to come back, be involved with their families and take the responsibility that they really appropriately bear and share with their spouse or the mother of that child.

Senator SANTORUM. Thank you.

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Santorum.

Senator BIDEN. Mr. Chairman, maybe I could make a brief opening statement now, because it relates to what both my colleagues have just said.

Chairman SPECTER. Fine.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR., A U.S. SENATOR  
FROM THE STATE OF DELAWARE**

Senator BIDEN. First of all, thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for refocusing on this issue. This is something you and I have worked on, and Senator Feinstein and Senator Santorum have for some time and trying to find out—one

of the most difficult things I find in my years in Congress and the Senate is that we author a program and we get invested in it, and even if it does not work we stay with it. One of the things I have tried to do, and you have done, is notwithstanding what we thought at the front end, if it is not working we should discard it and we should move on and invest our money in the areas that have the best prospect for success.

One of the things that—money will not solve this problem, but this problem cannot be solved without money. To me, looking at the numbers, which I have been doing the bulk of my adult life, is there is a—how can I say it—fighting crime and dealing with juvenile delinquency is a little bit like cutting grass. You can never spend less. I have never seen a single, solitary time where we spent less, the grass has not grown. It is like cutting your grass on Sunday and if you do not cut it for a week it looks okay. You do not cut it for two weeks, it looks a little ragged. Do not cut it for a month, it is a little jungle. That is how crime is.

So there has got to be a correlation here, and I think the Chairman is trying to find out, is between programs that work but investing in those programs that work, and investing more in those programs that work, not less.

Now one of the things for a long time—and I want to, by the way, point out, Mr. Chairman, Ms. Hart is a University of Delaware graduate. That is why she is so brilliant. And I want to publicly thank her for helping me so much on the DNA issue, and I want to thank all of you for your work.

But let me say that certain things that your testimony, which I have seen and what little I have heard because I was late—I want to make it clear I told the Chairman I would be necessarily late. I knew I was going to have to be late. But there are a couple things we know. Senator Feinstein has been a leader in focusing on preschool and how we focus in the place where it is most impressive. But one of the things that we know about that is that those children who are in homes that are dysfunctional and there is violence, tend to be the children who are the children who are most at risk.

So the Violence Against Women Act, which is, I admit, a pet of mine, I think is very, very important and I would like to talk to you at some point about the funding of that and the continuation of that, and the relationship if you—if there is none, I should know, between those efforts and getting at these kids early so they do not end up carrying the baggage that—you get at them indirectly. If the mother is no longer being beaten in front of their child then that takes away one of those things.

There are only a couple things I have observed that we have in common with adult prisoners or prisoners there because they have committed violent acts. They cannot read and they were subject of or witnesses of abuse. The only two things I have found in all the studies I have read the last 23 years that show the only commonality. There are other things that you could—but that is most significant thing shared by most of the violent offenders.

We also know that afterschool programs matter. The bulk of the crime of these kids is committed between the hours of 3:00 and 6:00. You have got what, 5.7 million kids in that range or ages 12 to 15-years-old that do not have any supervision at all.

The third I have noticed since the days I was a public defender is, those committing the most violent crimes are not age 18 to 21. They are ages 15 to 18. That is a gigantic change. And what we know about after arrest is unless there is supervision after arrest it does not matter. I do not know why we cannot figure this out, why this is so hard. We understand if you go in for a serious medical problem, you have the operation and there is no follow up with the doctor, you are not going to get healthy in almost all instances.

What do we do in our system? Whether it is letting a person out of jail, or whether it is dealing with drug treatment? You are talking about drug treatment. You all have been involved with that. None of these programs work in 30 days. None of these programs work in 30 days. None, none, none, none, none, none, none, none. None. Yet we go through this little game. We have these 30-day programs. We are talking for heroin, you are talking a year, six months a year to a year for any effective program unless—I stand corrected. I am in the question period now. Anybody interrupt me if there is any program you know for heroin, methamphetamine that in fact has worked in less than six months you can show to me. Have any of you ever heard of any?

Number two, we find that after they get out of even those programs, any program you know that works where there is not a follow-up, routine follow-up with these folks coming out of this treatment facilities? I have done this for the bulk of my adult life. I have not found one single one. Not one.

And when you deal with juvenile delinquency certain things are precursors we know. We know if you are a truant, look out. Truancy is the first indication. Am I wrong about that? Is there any indication that is not the case? And yet what do we do with truancy? We had programs that worked. We had programs and we funded them that followed up on all truants immediately. In certain cities where those programs have been done, they work. That is the first precursor. That is the first little red flag that goes up beyond the kid sort of poking another kid in class.

So my question for the panel is, that is there any way we are really going to get a handle on this unless we continue to impact on the violence witnessed in the home, have serious afterschool programs, and treatment programs that in fact have a duration that gives you a statistical possibility that recidivism will be reduced? That is my first question. Anyone.

Mr. FLORES. Senator, with respect to truancy, for example, we have not missed that. In fact for the very first time the Department of Education as well as the Department of Justice joined together to have really a national conference addressing that. That is a significant problem and one of the things that is great about the opportunity that is presented there is that the infrastructure to help solve that has only been bought and purchased. We have the schools, and one of the real challenges is finding a way to get those kids back into those seats.

With respect to the issue of literacy, there is a tremendous amount of frustration if you are closed out of any world, and being illiterate does just that. On top of which, if you are a young student and you go to school and you are forced to sit in front of a group of people and you are asked questions that you could not answer

because you could not read, at a certain point you just drop out. You do not want to be there.

Lastly, we view truancy as a tremendous sign a something else going wrong in the home, especially when it is young children. A five-year-old is not truant in the sense. They are not in school because their parents or their caregiver is not getting them to school.

Senator BIDEN. Why are we cutting the programs? Why are we cutting the money? I mean, I know it is above your pay grade and mine, but do you think it makes sense for us to cut out the money? We have cut Federal funding for—generically, for local law enforcement, local prevention monies. We have cut it by, I do not know what, 60 percent, 70 percent? Why are we doing that?

Let me put it another way, you cannot tell me why, I know. Does it makes sense to cut these problems that make available monies for communities to work on truancy problems? That is what we are doing.

Ms. ARIAS. The support definitely is needed. I think what is also important is that we have learned from the work that we have done in the field generally that it has to be a more comprehensive approach than we have done to date. So that rather than developing a program here, a program there, whether it is school-based, community-based, and implementing those, that there has to be a multidimensional, multifactorial effort so that a community is encouraged to look at the totality of things that do influence the development of that child. Family being one. School being another. Their peers, et cetera.

The other way that we like to think about it and one of the reasons why we are continuing to go in this direction is, as you mentioned, changes that are created in a child in school have to be supported in a community. We cannot expect, for example, a third-grader to change and then be responsible for maintaining that change, given all the developmental changes that they are undergoing.

The family violence issue is a very significant one, and the work that we have done in the prevention of domestic violence in the home, we do not perceive it only as then dealing with domestic violence but dealing with that next generation of violent youth and then violent adults. So that we see as an investment both in terms of what is happening to those women at the time, but also what those children then grow up to do to other women or to each other. So the relationship is not only there in terms of youth violence, but we know that those children are at high risk for suicide and other forms of violence, so it is an investment in, again, that early intervention. But again, that comprehensive approach is critical so that no kid who is ever touched by a program is going to fall through the cracks and then go back to where they were before.

Senator BIDEN. We have a fairly comprehensive program in some of these areas—my time is up—and we are having trouble keeping the funding going for these comprehensive programs. That old expression, in the long run we will all be dead. There is a lot of stuff we can do now. The Boston program is an example. It worked incredibly well. The community decided on a comprehensive—how to do it and then we stopped funding. So anyway, I will get back to that. My time is up.

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Biden. Thank you for coming today to Philadelphia for these hearings. Just one brief comment on violence in the home. It ought to be noted that Senator Biden has taken the national lead on violence against women, which is a major source of that particular issue, and I have been privileged to be his co-sponsor; something that I have seen over the years since my first days as an assistant district attorney many, many years ago.

Thank you for coming, Ms. Hart, Ms. Arias, Mr. Flores. This is just the beginning. We are going to be calling on you, Ms. Hart, from the National Institute of Justice to give us a comprehensive evaluation of what works and what does not work on the national scene. The fact is that there are sometimes three major departments which handle programs which have the same name and same purpose. The Judiciary Committee is going to be taking a very active role this year on our reauthorization function to evaluate the programs which work and which do not work, and we are going to be calling upon you from the National Institute of Justice to provide that information to us.

Mr. Flores, the same goes for you from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. You are right at the center of the juvenile crime issue, and you have studies on what works and what does not work, and we are going to want the specifics. This is going to be done at the staff level, but this is just the beginning. We cannot even tabulate how much money the Federal Government is spending, although we have been looking at it for several months. We have tabulated that it is \$160 million for Pennsylvania. We are going to ask you to do double duty, Ms. Hart, on Pennsylvania because of your background here.

Ms. Arias, when you talk to Dr. Gerberding, tell her her \$5 billion appropriation for CDC is secure, providing we do something on mental health as it applies to juvenile crime, and maybe even a little earmark for something in this city which has such an acute problem.

So this hearing has been in process now for many months working out the schedules of the Senators and working out the schedules of the witnesses, but I repeat, this is just a start to find out what works and what does not work and use the money we are now spending effectively, and then to take up the issue of additional funding where warranted. So thank you very much.

We will take a brief recess while the second panel is seated.

[Recess.]

Chairman SPECTER. The hearing will resume. We will begin with the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, the Honorable Patrick Meehan.

Mr. Meehan comes to the position with a very distinguished record in government and in law enforcement, having been the district attorney of Delaware County and having handled some of the highest profile cases in the past decade in the United States, and recently led his office to a very, very important jury verdict in a case of political corruption in the city of Philadelphia. He has been active in government, having managed the successful reelection campaigns for Senator Santorum in 1994 after having done the same thing for me in 1992.

Senator BIDEN. Are you available?

Chairman SPECTER. He is susceptible for the draft, Senator Biden.

But his second most important achievement is as a hockey referee; a really tough job, and his principal achievement is the father of two beautiful twin boys and a third beautiful boy all attributable to his beautiful wife.

Mr. Meehan, the floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF PATRICK MEEHAN, U.S. ATTORNEY FOR THE  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA, PHILADELPHIA,  
PENNSYLVANIA**

Mr. MEEHAN. Good morning, Senator, and thank you for that kind introduction. My wife will appreciate that. I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify about youth violence on behalf of U.S. Attorneys from around the country and about our offices' efforts to combat juvenile violence in a nine-county area which comprises the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. I understand the Committee is looking at violence committed by offenders between the ages of 15 and 24, and also the crimes committed against those young people. We have, as all the panelists, submitted significant written testimony so I will try to focus on the salient points of that.

In defining the problem, we are keenly aware of the problem of juvenile violence and we understand the urgency of stopping the violence committed by youth and the violence committed against them. According to statistics compiled by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, across Pennsylvania, and I suspect this is the same across the country, we are continuing to see a larger number of violence incidents reported by school officials. For just the 2002–2003 school year, the number of incidents involving a weapon at a school has grown from 859 to 932 in our city of Philadelphia, and statewide we continue to see about 41 incidents a year involving firearms in the schools.

What should not be lost in these statistics is the harsh impact that firearm violence has on families and communities. Violence tears at the very fabric of Philadelphia's neighborhoods, and as the neighborhoods go, so goes the city. The death of 10-year-old Faheem Thomas-Childs on the Pierce Elementary School playground in North Philadelphia brought that reality home to many in our region. On February 14, 2002 at approximately 9:00 a.m., two rival gangs started shooting at each other, firing more than 60 rounds outside a school playground. One bullet found Faheem Thomas-Childs, and his tragic death pierced the spirit of an entire city.

Let me tell you what our office is trying to do to try to prevent youth violence. As the Committee knows, prosecution of juvenile offenders is done almost exclusively by local prosecutors. Federal prosecutors are constrained by Federal jurisdiction limits and are focused on adult offenders. But that is not to say that Federal prosecution efforts are divorced from the problem of violence committed by youth. Our office is engaged in a robust effort to attack firearms violence, and to the extent that this coincides with youth crime, we are involved. You have heard many comments about Project Safe Neighborhoods, the chief vehicle we use to combat firearms vio-

lence in the nine-county Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Our district includes Philadelphia, but also includes cities like Chester, Coatesville, Reading, Allentown, Lancaster, all of which have experienced gun violence.

PSN, or Safe Neighborhoods, recognizes that violent criminal organizations—I saw criminal organizations as Senator Feinstein had noticed, are the most disruptive force in many neighborhoods, and the responses to these criminal organizations among various law enforcement agencies, both Federal and State, need to be coordinated. We use Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative to coordinate diverse law enforcement resources around a strategic plan that is defined by those who work in each district. The priorities are to dismantle violent organizations first. Second, to stop illegal gun traffickers. And third, to enforce the law against prohibited persons possessing firearms.

But there are interlocking components of Project Safe Neighborhood initiative which our office has coordinated to combat firearms violence in the district. As Sarah Hart said, we strive to match shorter term law enforcement efforts with longer term community intervention and prevention programs to leverage our impact in the schools and with our youth in the neighborhoods, pay particular to Project Sentry and the Youth Violence Reduction Project. Project Sentry is designed to bring both Federal, State and local law enforcement to prosecute and supervise juveniles who violate Federal and State firearms laws, to prosecute the adults who illegally provide firearms to juveniles, and to promote safety throughout the community.

With your help, we had Federal monies. We gave \$700,000 of those funds from our Project Sentry program and contributed it to the city's youth violence reduction program. This program is an intense supervision program designed to prevent the offenders from slipping back into criminal behavior. Once juvenile and law enforcement officials identify violent juvenile offenders, local probation officers provide constant monitoring of the offenders. Educational and vocational training are made available to make sure that they do not commit new offenses and they become productive members of the community. YVRP is a model program. It targets those 15- to 24-year-olds most likely to kill or to be killed, with intensive supervision. One element is Archie Laycock's Don't Fall Down in the Hood. He worked with 14- to 18-year-olds who are on probation because they have been in possession of a firearm.

Similar though less intensive programs, Porchlight Programs, are operating in Delaware, Berks, Lehigh and Lancaster Counties.

Chairman SPECTER. Can you summarize and your full statement will be made a part of the record?

Mr. MEEHAN. Yes, Senator.

The conclusion is that by working together, focusing prevention with intensive law enforcement efforts collectively, as we wrap around the prevention efforts, we can have an impact on violence both in our neighborhoods and in the homes to make a difference. But that key is the collaboration and communication.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Meehan appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much. We are on a very close time schedule, regrettably, and we want to save as much time as we can for questions and answers.

Our next witness is the distinguished Commissioner of Police of the city of Philadelphia, Sylvester Johnson, who has been in this position since January 4, 2002. From 1998 until his appointment as Commissioner, he was deputy commissioner for operations. He has a long list of awards, including the award of valor, received the director's award from the U.S. Department of Justice executive office for the Weed and Seed Program. He attended the senior management institute for police at Harvard and the FBI National Executive Institute, and he has been on the police force since 1964, Commissioner Johnson, which makes you only five years junior to me on service in Philadelphia law enforcement. Draw a murmur from the crowd. Thank you for—I hate to talk about dates. It is too reminiscent of age. But thank you for the good work you are doing and for joining us here today, and we look forward to your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF SYLVESTER JOHNSON, COMMISSIONER,  
PHILADELPHIA POLICE DEPARTMENT, PHILADELPHIA,  
PENNSYLVANIA**

Commissioner JOHNSON. Thank you. It is an honor to be here and I appreciate being here with the people that are on the panel. My comments are not going to be very, very long and I will try to keep it as brief as I possibly can. I thank the Committee for traveling to Philadelphia for this important hearing and I hope the testimony you hear today will provide the Committee valuable insight into how youth and gang violence can be reduced in cities across the country.

Violent crime is an assault on our communities. Violent crime committed by juveniles is especially disturbing. Watching our children gunned down in the streets, bringing knives and guns to school, stealing, robbing, drug dealing can lead to a sense of hopelessness for the future of our community. There are many factors that lead to juvenile crime and violence. It is fueled by poverty, drug dealing, broken families, and a popular culture that glamorizes narcotics and gunplay.

We must, therefore, effectively and efficiently use our limited resources to continue successful initiatives, and develop new programs to reverse this trend. The city as a whole is deeply invested in this problem. Not only law enforcement and the courts but community organizations, faith-based groups, health care providers, everyone with an interest in keeping our children and our streets safe.

Youth homicides in Philadelphia for 2005 have seen a tragic increase due in part to gun violence. From January 1, 2005 to May 31, 2005 there was a total of 63 homicides for youth 24 years old and under. For that same period in 2004 there were a total of 41 homicides by youth 24 years old and under. From January 1, 2005 to June 7, 2005 the city of Philadelphia has had a total of 340 shooting victims of youth 24 years old and younger.

The Philadelphia police department considers youth violence a serious threat to the future and quality of life for our young people.

Philosophically, we believe that arrests alone will not solve the problem of youth violence. As I have said repeatedly, we cannot arrest our way out of this problem. Only a holistic approach will decrease the incidents of youth violence in the city and around the country. The police department has in the past and will continue to partner with other city agencies, religious and community groups and organizations, State and local law enforcement agencies, business and private organizations dedicated to working with our youth. The goal of this partnership and collaboration is to identify at-risk youth, intervene in the most effective way with a goal of decreasing youth violence.

As a police department we handle youth violence in the same way that we handle adult violence, intervene immediately and work diligently to protect against retaliation and ongoing disputes. We believe strongly that the key to success in preventing future violence is our ability to analyze incidents, gather intelligence and make the necessary connection. A strong police presence on our streets in our communities has proven successful as a deterrent to crime, as a strong role model to our youth. In the past year we have developed two new strategies that we expect will make a significant difference.

The Youth Violence Reduction Project is a multiagency effort aimed at reducing youth homicides by focusing on youth seven to 24 who are most at risk to kill or be killed. The Youth Violence Reduction Project operates in three police districts, 24th police district begun in June 1999, 25th began in two phases, southern section in January 2000, and full district by October 2000. The 12th district began August 2002. Since 1999, the Youth Violence Reduction Program has 1,440 youth partners. The majority of them, 90 percent are male and 89 percent are Afro-Americans or Hispanic. The median age is 17. Of these youth partners, 13 have died, 10 by homicides, two by suicide and one by auto accident, and seven have been arrested for murder.

The Youth Violence Reduction Program currently costs approximately \$3,594,000 a year including \$929,000 in city funds and in-kind services. We estimate the cost expansion to an additional police district amounts to about \$1,546,000 to pay for more intensive police, probation and parole supervisors, and street workers to deliver positive support, additional prosecutorial and court expense, data monitoring, job training and other costs. With economy of scale, we believe that Youth Violence Reduction Program could be expanded to three high risk districts for a total additional cost of less than \$4,574,000 annually.

We are grateful for the Federal, State, local and private support that has allowed us to establish and sustain this initiative at its current level. We hope that the success demonstrated from these initiatives will justify additional funds.

In conclusion, youth violence in American cities remains an extremely persistent problem. There has been considerable research in recent years of how to tackle it. A 2001 Surgeon General report on youth violence noted that the key to preventing a great deal of violence is understanding where and when it occurs, demonstrating what causes it, and scientifically demonstrating which of many strategies for prevention and intervening are truly effective.

If given a choice, most law enforcement officials would choose successful prevention or early intervention programs over arrest and prosecution. To that end, the Philadelphia police department works to foster programs that emphasize prevention, DARE, GREAT, Explorers Youth, Heads Up, Police Athletic League. We are closely monitoring the results of all our initiatives, continually emphasizing accountability for performance and adjusting our approach as the need demands as we are keeping our eyes on the ultimate goal of saving lives.

Thank you very much for your time today. Thank you very much for your invitation to be here.

[The prepared statement of Commissioner Johnson appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much, Commissioner Johnson. Thank you for your testimony.

Senator Santorum, do you have any closing comments? I know you have a plane to Pittsburgh.

Senator SANTORUM. I have to head to Pittsburgh. I appreciate your having this hearing and I thank my colleagues for coming. I am going to take the testimony with me and I will read it on the plane. Thank you all very much. Appreciate it.

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much for joining us, Rick. Appreciate it.

Our next witness is Mr. James Kane, executive director of the State of Delaware's Criminal Justice Council where he has served since 1996. He has a very distinguished record in government work in Delaware including the Governor's Advisory Commission on Youth, the Governor's Council on Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health, and the Governor's Safe Streets Committee. He served as president of the National Criminal Justice Association from 2001 through 2003 and has had a number of important publications. We thank Senator Biden for his recommendation of Executive Director Kane and we look forward your testimony, Mr. Kane.

**STATEMENT OF JAMES KANE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DELAWARE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COUNCIL, WILMINGTON, DELAWARE**

Mr. KANE. Thank you very much for allowing me to testify. My parents are originally from Philadelphia. It is nice to come home. My mom went to Kensington and my dad went to West Catholic in LaSalle.

At the Criminal Justice Council we tend to look at the criminal justice system as a continuum of events involving clients as they flow through the system. The council began looking at the characteristics of convicted criminals approximately 20 years ago. We have reviewed social and economic demographics of violent criminals. We have looked at the same criminals as juvenile delinquents, and we have looked at these same delinquents as abused children prior to their involvement in the criminal justice system.

Over the years, we have become very adroit at arresting, prosecuting and convicting serious violent offenders. One of the few things that we know for certain is that a two-time violent felon has an excellent chance, in our State about an 80 percent change of

being convicted of another violent felony. We have concentrated most of our efforts in the law enforcement area on serious predators who we know are difficult, if not impossible, to rehabilitate. We have concentrated on these individuals with the assistance of the United States Department of Justice through crime bill money. We have usually been able to reduce crime in whatever geographic area that we maximize our law enforcement effort. We have been less successful in the area of rehabilitation.

In the last several years, the Criminal Justice Council planners in Delaware have conducted some landmark research on the demographics of serious violent adult and juvenile offenders, and social and economic conditions that produce these offenders. Obvious to the most casual observer, but it still is vital to continue to indicate that single female head of households, poverty, high school dropouts, extensive drug and alcohol abuse, terrible housing, and a general condition of socioeconomic hopelessness tend to produce our worst violent criminals. In selected grids within the city of Wilmington, and Delaware as a whole, we can probably predict which neighborhoods will produce what amount of inmates for our correctional facilities.

Until we can develop some type of formula that provides hope for our young people in a comprehensive fashion we will continue to produce criminals that employ large numbers of law enforcement officers, defense attorney, prosecutors and court personnel and correctional personnel. Earlier there was some discussion about the cost of inmates. In Delaware it is about \$30,000 an inmate and we have got about 6,500 in prison and 20,000 on probation. We are already suffering in Delaware from a huge expansion of our correctional facilities. We cannot hire enough guards to staff the prisons because we cannot pay them enough and it is not the greatest kind of work. The cost for these inmates is becoming astronomical.

Programs that we tend to know that do not work are one-shot events, or events that do not impact the child's life in a long term fashion. Over the years we have paid for countless speakers who have, in spite of their environment, made it in the world. They would come in, conduct a one-day seminar, charge us \$5,000 and go away, and the young people go back to the same neighborhood where they came from. We have invested large amounts of money for law enforcement education in schools on the evils of drugs and crime. And we have funded well-intentioned programs that work on one aspect of the child's life. Examples could be child abuse, tutoring, cultural development.

The success that we have had in working with youth has been in the area of providing comprehensive services to that youth. Where we have funded it involved tutoring, cultural development, value development, recreational activities, and basically supply a family environment outside of the home. We have had some success in increasing the educational levels of these youth. These programs have included Boys and Girls Clubs, Police Athletic Leagues, and other community centers that provide this comprehensive environment.

Still these programs are scattered in nature. We have provided these programs in at-risk neighborhoods to at-risk children but we still do not capture the very, very high-risk individual who may be-

come violent. Our studies indicate that 80 percent of the shooters-shootees in the city of Wilmington are African-American males between the ages of 14 and 24. If you look at the criminal justice system and criminals as a pyramid, at the top of the pyramid are two-time violent felons. The pool of individuals at the bottom of the pyramid tend to be poor African-American male children who do not have the means to make it in society.

Recently we developed a value-based education program that will provide a comprehensive school for African-American boys in the city of Wilmington. After extensive bidding we contracted to a concept called the Nativity School. They operate about six of these in the country. They have agreed to take 25 African-American male children from poor neighborhoods grades four and five. The program operates from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the evening and children are with school personnel all day on Saturdays. They leave for a month in the summer to different colleges and live in a dorm. The program has worked in other areas of the Northeast and it provides disadvantaged African-American males with an opportunity for success. They just sent me their first newsletter in Latin. I could barely read it, but I was an alter boy so I had a shot at it.

If I knew the answer on how to reduce the current problem I would probably be a million-dollar consultant. I do know that the only way to change the behavior of young people before they become violent in the criminal justice system is to provide some form of comprehensive environment similar to that of a high-functioning family.

In the past, the crime bill provided the States with a balanced funding approach to criminal justice so that we could create innovations for different components of the criminal justice system. Examples of our innovation have included projects funded under the JJDP Act, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. This act literally removed thousands of abused and neglected children from the criminal justice system. The crime bill created many innovations in the arena of speedy processing that otherwise would not have been initiated. Also community policing initiatives have made countless neighborhoods safer around the country and definitely in Delaware.

I thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kane appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Kane.

Our next witness is the Chief Executive Officer of the School District of Philadelphia, Mr. Paul Vallas, who has been in that position since July of 2002, and his tenure has been marked by very, very substantial improvements in the school district. He previously had served as CEO of the Chicago public schools from 1995 to 2001 and was the budget director for the city of Chicago, but also the revenue director.

I can personally attest to his financial skills because he and Ben Schmidt came to the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education a few years ago and told us about a \$20 million shortfall. To make a very long story very short, the funding was directed through the

State to distressed schools. And somehow he returned the next year and said he needed \$20 million more. And he came back the year after that and you will be surprised to hear what he said that year. It has practically become an entitlement, but it has been put to very good use with the summer school program last year being funded by that Federal appropriation, and I think being a significant factor in helping on the crime issue, the juvenile crime issue, although it seems to be very, very difficult.

I give him further credit in a conversation we had months ago for making suggestions about what programs had worked in other jurisdictions, and being an innovator and suggesting these hearings here today.

Beyond that, he was a candidate for Governor of Illinois a few years back. I forget on which ticket and I forget what the result was, but he may want to testify about it.

[Laughter.]

Chairman SPECTER. The floor is yours, Superintendent Vallas.

**STATEMENT OF PAUL VALLAS, SUPERINTENDENT,  
PHILADELPHIA SCHOOLS, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA**

Mr. VALLAS. Thank you so much. I am going to do something unprecedented by me. I tend to be a little too talkative. I am going to use my five minutes to refer to a binder that I have provided to the Senators and to staff. What I have attempted to do, this is my legislative staff experience coming out, is to provide background material, reference material that I think will prove to be very helpful to the Committee and to their staff.

Tab one lays out my testimony which I am going to defer commenting on.

Tab two lays out some relevant statistics about school safety, specifically in the city of Philadelphia.

Tab three is a discussion of a Project Peace Initiative which is an initiative designed to get students involved in peer mediation and resolving problems through non-conflict resolutions.

Tab four is background material on the Philadelphia youth violence prevention partnership which all of the previous speakers have made reference to. Let me point out that where the partnership has been implemented it has had tangible, substantive success. It is certainly a model worth expanding to other districts in Philadelphia.

Tab five, relevant articles of interest, again in support of the Philadelphia youth violence prevention initiative.

Tab six and seven is the Philadelphia juvenile justice curriculum, a curriculum that is being integrated into the school district at the middle grades, and it is designed to teach the young children not only conflict resolution but also values, character, and to teach them about the consequences of committing serious offenses. It is also supplemented by a comprehensive anti-violence initiative initiated by the district attorney's office. I am sorry, the district attorney's office is the author of the juvenile justice curriculum. The U.S. Attorney's Office is the author of the anti-violence initiative that is designed to teach young people the consequences of the use of firearms.

Tab eight is some background material on the Boston miracle, the Boston Operation Nightlight, which was a significant effort at reducing youth violence in Boston, had great success and is considered to be a national model.

Tab nine is background material on the Chicago community youth program. Chicago has had a significant reduction in youth violence in the last couple years due in large part to this initiative. So background material, summary materials well worth referencing.

Then finally, Tab 10, which is not available yet, only because we do not want to violate copyright laws, we are providing the commission with an excerpt from Malcolm Gladwell's book, *The Tipping Point*, the chapter on broken windows that talks about the New York miracle.

So our objective here has been to provide background material in a very concise, specific way that can be helpful to the Committee and that can also be helpful, obviously, to the Committee staff; material I am sure the Committee staff has been able to access on their own.

Before I finish my statement I would like to offer a few brief policy principles that I feel are evident or emerge from all of these models, from the New York experience, to the Boston experience, to the Chicago experience, and even the Philadelphia experience through the Philadelphia Youth Violence Prevention Partnership.

One is, to be successful, violence prevention must be coordinated. So obviously we support programs and equipment that will allow for greater coordination among local agencies in tracking and dealing with chronically and habitually disruptive students, as well as habitually disruptive youth. According to the public-private ventures report, one of the key successes to the YVRP initiative and the key successes to initiatives that have been undertaken in Boston and Chicago and elsewhere have been the coordination among many of the participating groups and agencies. And of course, this coordination can be further enhanced through technology.

Second is that students at risk to engage in violent acts benefit from specialized attention. If you look at the Chicago initiative, they have an extensive early assessment program designed to look at the health care and educational needs of students and then to literally develop what I would characterize as anti-violence IEPs designed to intervene before a child has gone down the path of violence. But early intervention, early diagnosis, focusing on the problem as really a public health problem are ways that we can overcome these tragic incidents and help us address the problems and challenges that we face.

Third is the need to provide young people with constructive alternatives to violence. Summer school and afterschool programs such as those that have been provided in Philadelphia, in large part through the good offices of Senator Specter and Senator Santorum, providing for youth job programs, providing children with extra-curricular activities to get them off the street, values character education. In the Philadelphia public schools partnering with faith-based institutions, we have a youth net program, a program that is designed to use faith-based institutions to provide afterschool

and extracurricular character education and intervention services. All these things can make a big difference.

But again, I will refer you, with your permission, to the reference material we provided in the book, and again in Tab one it lays out my opening comments where I not only discuss some of these issues in general but I also identify a number of what I consider to be best practices that we are adopting in the school district of Philadelphia. Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Vallas appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much, Superintendent Vallas.

We now turn to the distinguished Assistant Chief of Police of Pittsburgh, Ms. Regina McDonald, who comes to that position after a very distinguished academic and professional career. Of particular interest to the Committee is the portion of her testimony relating to the narcotic impact squads and putting uniformed officers into areas which experience a surge in violent activity.

We thank you for coming across the State, Chief McDonald, and look forward to your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF REGINA MCDONALD, ASSISTANT CHIEF,  
PITTSBURGH BUREAU OF POLICE, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA**

Chief MCDONALD. Thank you, Senator.

The Pittsburgh Police Bureau's philosophy of policing incidents of youth violence involves a two-pronged approach. First we try to be proactive in preventing such incidents from occurring. And second, we aggressively investigate and prosecute incidents when they do occur.

Our proactive approach includes a close working relationship with the Pittsburgh public schools and their school police, Allegheny County Juvenile Court, the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office, and the ATF Violent Crime Impact Team. When we see a spike in incidents or get reliable information of possible violence in a specific area of the city, we detail our Narcotics Impact Squads to the area and our Uniform Ten Car Officers. We've found this to be very effective in squashing violence as it occurs.

After the Impact Squads and Ten Cars leave the area, Zone Officers are responsible for the maintenance. Several areas of the city are being targeted by the ATF Violent Crime Impact Team with ATF agents and city officers working together to get guns and violent offenders off the streets. Both adults and juveniles have been targeted. This has been a very effective project.

We are also in the process of preparing a detailed description of gang activity in the city. Although gang activity has not reached the magnitude we see in other major cities, we are seeing a re-emergence of gangs in the city. We are working closely with Federal and State law enforcement agencies and the Allegheny County Juvenile Probation in identifying gangs, members, and associates within the city of Pittsburgh. Once we get a picture of gang activity in the city we are planning to work closely with U.S. Attorney's Office in prosecuting those gangs.

With recent reductions in our police force—we have lost 100 officers, we are now at a staffing level of 900—we were forced to discontinue the Community-Oriented Policing Program. This program included 86 Community-Oriented Police Officers working out of each of the five police zones in the city. We currently have four Community Problem-Solving Officers assigned to each zone. Zone Commanders use these officers to target specific problems, including acts of violence around schools and illegal drug activity. We continue to work closely with community groups and organizations throughout the city. Zone Commanders meet monthly with community leaders at their Public Safety Zone Council Meetings. Crime Prevention/Crime Analyst Officers also work closely with community-based organizations, and zone officers attend community meetings held in their patrol areas.

As I have mentioned, we have been working closely with Allegheny County Juvenile Probation. Probation Officers participate in ride-alongs with Zone Officers, and our officers and Intel Squad Detectives assist Juvenile Probation with their Warrant Squad when they conduct the round-ups of juveniles who are wanted on outstanding arrest warrants. This relationship has been very beneficial to both agencies.

We have found that these proactive approaches have been very effective and they have enhanced our ability to prevent and reduce the spread of juvenile violence as well as increase our ability to arrest and convict violent offenders. We work closely with the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office in preparation and prosecution of those cases. Our close working relationship with Allegheny County Juvenile Probation enables us to get repeat offenders off the street as soon as possible.

Our major concern today is with the prevalence of firearms and the increasing number of juveniles carrying and using firearms. In the year 2000 our officers made 269 VUFA arrests. That increased to 364 in 2001, 401 in 2002, 472 in 2003, and to an all-time high of 616 in 2004. For the first five months of 2005, we have made 231 arrests, which is in line with last year's figures. In the year 2004, we had 47 individuals in the age group from zero to 16 years of age arrested for VUFA, with the age group 17 to 24 years of age accounting for 363 arrests. The figures for these age groups for the first five months of this year include 12 and 143 arrests, respectively. We need to do more to keep these violent offenders off the street. Strict enforcement of all firearms statutes should include juveniles as well as adults.

In closing, I would like to thank Senator Specter for inviting us to this committee meeting. I would also like to mention that with the discussion of previous panel members you have concentrated on what funding sources have been beneficial to various agencies, and I would like to say that the Project Safe Neighborhood grant program is very beneficial to us, as well as Weed and Seed and the Local Law Enforcement Grant Program.

[The prepared statement of Chief McDonald appears as a submission for the record.]

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much, Chief McDonald for coming to testify. I appreciate your references to a number of the programs which there have been Federal funding on. We have been

very solicitous of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County and the tremendous economic problems with the problems in the steel industry and coal. One of the programs which we coordinated with Mayor Murphy of specific assistance was when there were witnesses who were being targeted by gangs we came in with a special appropriation to be of assistance on witness protection. It is a major concern to know about your having terminated some 100 police officers. We know the problems that Pittsburgh is having financially; well known.

To what extent has that reduction in your force impacted on the problem of juvenile violence?

Chief McDONALD. Amazingly enough, with the reduction from 1,000 to 900 officers we have still seen a decrease in crime. It is a testament to the abilities and hard-working efforts of our police officers. So with the loss of those 100 officers we have not seen anything—no one dropped the ball and in fact our officers are performing outstandingly well.

Chairman SPECTER. That is a good response. We are going to take a very close look at your success rate. Maybe we can cut some—I would not say that coming to Commissioner Johnson as to his situation in this city. Mr. Johnson, I note your testimony from January 1, 2005 to June 7 of this year, a total of 340 shooting victims of youth age 24 and younger, and this is in the same period of time roughly where the number of homicides went to 63 in the first five months of the year compared to 41 last year. But the 63 homicides are vastly under the 340 shooting victims, which is obviously very distressing.

Your program on youth violence reduction partnership which is in effect in some three police districts has had a very salutary good effect. How much additional funding do you need to carry that city-wide to try to have some impact on this juvenile crime problem?

Commissioner JOHNSON. I think what I testified before is approximately, if we put it into another district it would be approximately anywhere from \$1.5 million per district. To give you a little more statistics, when we put it in the 24th police district in 1999, murders in the district among youth from age seven to 24 declined by 62 percent. That went from 11 in 1998 to just 4.2. In the 25th district from 2000 they declined 52 percent, and in the 26th district they declined by something like 32 percent.

Chairman SPECTER. What percentage, Commissioner, is that of the whole city? Three districts represents what percentage of the city?

Commissioner JOHNSON. We have 23 police districts so when you are talking about—

Chairman SPECTER. Okay, I can figure that out then if they are all roughly equal in size. What I would like you to do is to tell the Committee what kind of funding you would need to put that program in effect on a citywide basis. That is what I would like you to do. But I would like you to submit it in writing because of the limited time we have here today.

Superintendent Vallas, thank you for the big book. We are going to be studying it and following up with you on some detail. From our prior conversations you have suggested that there are some areas where, some jurisdictions which have had some marked suc-

cess. We want to pursue that with you further. Frankly, when we took a look there they were not quite as rosy as some of the preliminary suggestions had been. And when we asked for the statistics they were not available. So the business of finding what has worked is somewhat elusive.

Director Kane, I am going to leave you to Senator Biden because that will be sufficient.

In conclusion, my time is almost up, I want to ask you, Mr. Meehan, for your thinking on a coordinated approach on the Federal programs. You have a lion's share with the Eastern District and you have had a lot of experience in this field. One of the items that I did not mention is your serving as executive director for my Philadelphia office and really running the State program. What we are going to be looking to you to do, when we come up with what works and what does not work, is to ask you to take on an additional burden, if we may, to coordinate where these Federal programs are going, because you have got the best handle on the way it looks in a variety of counties.

Your testimony summarized where crime has gone down. But I think that a big job of the prosecuting attorney—and I have had some experience at it—is to be proactive in the prevention field as well as in the prosecution field because you have special insights as a prosecutor. So we are going to be calling on you to do that. You do not have to give an answer now because I have gone over my time which I do not like to do.

I now yield to Senator Feinstein.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much.

First of all it is great to see Paul Vallas. I first met him, Mr. Chairman, in Chicago when he was running things there and found him to be an excellent superintendent, and now here in Philadelphia, and my hope would be we would be able to get him in California one day, so I will leave that one out there.

I am somewhat surprised by the testimony of this law enforcement panel. No one has mentioned a specific gang, and my information from the National Drug Intelligence Center indicates that there are four specific gangs functioning in Pennsylvania today. They are Bloods, they are Gangster Disciples, they are Crips, they are MS-13, and there is the group Tiny Rascals also. I guess I see gangs very differently, because they are a massive interstate criminal enterprise today. What surprises me is that none of the law enforcement people talked about this.

So my question of them is this, which gangs do you find operate here, meaning Pennsylvania? What ages are they? What crimes do they commit? And what would you say is the total gang membership in both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and this State, if you have it?

Commissioner JOHNSON. If I can go first—but I would give it to the U.S. Attorney first. I am sorry.

Mr. MEEHAN. Not at all.

Commissioner JOHNSON. We do not really have a gang problem here in the city of Philadelphia, per se. We do not have the Bloods, the Crips. I think MS-13 is starting to arrive here. Most of our problem is drug related and has been drug related for a long period of time. But as far as organized gangs here in the city of Philadel-

phia it does not exist, at least not on a large scale like Chicago or California or some other place. Maybe the U.S. Attorney might know a little more. I mean, we have some people who are identifying themselves as gangs. In the early 1970s we had a lot of gangs, territorial type things, but that does no longer exist here in city of Philadelphia.

Mr. MEEHAN. Senator, if I may, to be responsive to your question, we have seen some activity from the Almighty Latin Kings. It is largely in the Latino community and actually largely outside the city of Philadelphia. What the commissioner says is my impression as well, and it is due to the nature of Philadelphia being a city of neighborhoods where we have an indigenous population. It is difficult for the gang culture to break into the neighborhood context. But it because they are working very effectively already; they have got their own industry. They do not need direction from Chicago or Los Angeles to be effective at selling drugs or committing crime.

Senator FEINSTEIN. So what you are saying effectively is that you do not have the type of gang problem that we are talking about on the West Coast of large organized gang syndicates, bigger than organized crime ever was.

Mr. MEEHAN. We do not have it, but I do not want to make that a misstatement. You are so correct in saying, we still have the same issues with younger people being recruited into criminal organizations and those organizations controlling the tempo of neighborhoods. What we have is a structure of a lot of loosely-knit independent organizations that do not rely on the national structure like MS-13 and the Latin Kings.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you.

Chief McDONALD. We see the same thing in Pittsburgh. We are a city of neighborhoods as well, so when we see gangs we see neighborhood groups, even down to the level of streets, specific street groups, sprouting up. Then on numerous occasions there are altercations among those groups.

But recently we saw a group in our Oakland section of the city which identified themselves as the Oakland Crips, but they are no relationship to the Crips from California or anywhere else. But this was a youth gang, two juveniles were arrested for bank robbery and they were under the leadership of an adult who was later arrested. Because those are the types of organizations we are looking at.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you. I just want to say one thing. This is a very important distinction; violence, drug trafficking, drug use, other crimes to what has really grown up in the United States. You should really be very proud and pleased that you have escaped it, maybe because of your diligence and your ability to deal with it. I certainly hope that is the case. But, Mr. Chairman, my recommendation would be that you hold a meeting like this in Los Angeles. Trust me, you will hear a very, very different story.

Thank you.

Chairman SPECTER. Senator Feinstein, that is a suggestion which I think it is a very important one and we will try to accomplish that consistent with our schedule. I know in the nation of California you have special problems. How many do you have now, 34 million?

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thirty-five-and-a-half million.

Chairman SPECTER. How many times is that the size of Delaware?

Senator FEINSTEIN. Delaware is not bigger than city and county of San Francisco. So we will leave it at that.

Senator BIDEN. I would point out we are in Constitution Hall. The Connecticut Compromise which guaranteed there was a Constitution—the Founders were brilliant enough to provide two Senators from Delaware, as they have from every other—

[Laughter.]

Chairman SPECTER. How did Delaware get to be the number one State though?

Senator BIDEN. We seceded from Pennsylvania.

Chairman SPECTER. The start of the Civil War.

[Laughter.]

Chairman SPECTER. Senator Biden, your time is on for questioning.

Senator BIDEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I know I could speak for the panel when I say, our drug problem is immense here. It is gigantic. Reconfigured a different way, I am not going to take my five minutes to go into it, but for the record, Pat—Mr. Meehan and Chief, both of you, and Chief McDonald, I think you should submit for the record what the nature of the drug problem is in your communities, as well as I would ask Jim to do the same thing for the record as it relates to Delaware. Because we have some of the, unfortunately, the purest heroin and the purest stuff that comes through here, and it comes into the port, and comes into the port of New York and works its way down 95, and we have a gigantic problem that manifests itself the same way but different levers. I think we should not leave the impression that we are just doing fine here.

I know that is not what you are saying. You are responding to specific questions and it is important to do that.

Let me ask me you, Chief McDonald, you indicated that you had to move away from the community policing. How recently did you have to do that?

Chief McDONALD. About three years ago.

Senator BIDEN. Chief, you indicated in your written testimony that a strong police presence on our streets and in our communities has proven successful as a deterrent to crime, and a strong role model for youth out of this community policing. Have you been able to maintain your force, Chief, at the same—at its end strength, its authorized end strength?

Commissioner JOHNSON. No, from July 1, 2003 to the present we are down approximately 620 police officers.

Senator BIDEN. Has that had an effect on your ability to provide services in the city?

Commissioner JOHNSON. No, it does not. I have a philosophy that law enforcement by itself is never going to change the quality of life. And I think we place—police officers more on the streets of Philadelphia and have to understand the fiscal concerns of the city and I have to deal with that. But the facts are that it has to be a holistic type approach. I also feel as though traditional policing

is not working, and traditional policing is only locking people up, and we will never arrest out of the problem that we are having.

I think that the clergy, the community, the politicians, everyone has to be involved in this. If they are only going to depend on law enforcement to change the quality of life, it will not happen. We can make a whole lot of arrests, but I think what happens, the community is not concerned about the arrests. They are concerned about quality of life. It is not about statistics, it is about quality of life and I think that is very important.

Senator BIDEN. Some of you have mentioned various acts that have worked, the community prevention grants, the juvenile accountability block grants, the program that you mentioned, Pat, that was so successful, Project Safe Neighborhoods, et cetera. If my numbers are correct, each of those programs is suffering fairly significant cuts. So on the one hand we are cutting police either because we are stopping the COPS program or the cities do not have the money so you end up with fewer police. And I understand your generic point, Chief, that cops alone are not going to stop crime by any stretch of the imagination. You have to have this holistic approach.

That then means that you are talking about prevention programs and programs dealing with recidivism. Yet, Superintendent Vallas, have you been able to significantly increase your afterschool programs?

Mr. VALLAS. We have, but only because of the support of Senator Specter and Senator Santorum. Let me point out that the additional funds we have been able to secure have allowed us to have probably one of the largest per capita afterschool extended day programs probably in the country. I will point out that obviously it has an effect of keeping our young people out of harm's way. It has the added benefit of helping us meet AYP. I think we have gone from 22 schools making adequate yearly progress to 160 in just the last two years. So clearly we have been—but it has required that type of special intervention and special assistance for us to have the type of afterschool extended day activities.

Let me also point out that 180 of our schools, which is about 80 percent, about 75 percent of our schools not only have school district afterschool extended day programs but we have community-based programs. So many of our schools, for example, the Maris Beacon program goes on into the early evening. So our buildings are utilized for more than just school-based afterschool extracurricular activities.

Senator BIDEN. There is one thing each of you—my time is up.

Chairman SPECTER. Go ahead, Joe.

Senator BIDEN. If there is one thing, just one thing that each of you could have us do—not generically, specifically—if you had one specific request what would you have us do? What would you have the United States, the Federal Government do? What one thing, if you only got one?

I am not being facetious. Because, look, when we get through all this—we all know about holistic approaches. We have been doing this for as long as you all have been doing it. We care very deeply about it. We know the relationship between preschool, afterschool. We know the relationship between law enforcement dealing with

gangs, dealing with treatment, et cetera. But when it gets down to it, we end up with trying to figure out what works and what does not work, and for each one of you—it may very well be you decide you need more probation officers, or you need more funding for afterschool, or you need more funding—what one thing—it is unfair, but what one thing, if you had to pick, would you want more help on from the Federal level?

Mr. VALLAS. Obviously, fully funding No Child Left Behind, but let us focus specifically on the issue at hand. Summer jobs, jobs programs for young people, and I will tell you why. One of the things that we have attempted to do is to create an incentive for children to stay in school and to stay well behaved. Congressman Fattah, who is in the audience, initiated his corps Philly scholar program which basically says, if students are in good standing, when they graduate they will be provided a scholarship equal to their first year differential, what they access through obviously loans and student grants and what they do not have to go to college their first year.

Same thing, drivers ed is something that if children are in good standing we will provide them. Summer jobs, summer internships so we can get the kids into constructive activities and then use those summer jobs and summer internships as an incentive to keep kids in school and to keep—and to help influence student behavior. I think it would be the one thing beyond, obviously, fully funding No Child Left Behind that would make a dramatic difference.

Mr. MEEHAN. Senator, I need to identify, because I am in law enforcement, my appreciation, and I would ask you to continue to sustain the Project Safe Neighborhoods kind of program, and by extension, the violent crime impact teams. We have an ability to work at the local level in a unique way. Each district attorney works with my office and local policy to identify unique problems to their neighborhood. It gives us flexibility. Those assistant prosecutors are assigned to my office. We make decisions about which cases to bring locally or federally. That gives us tremendous leverage, and we use the resources well.

I will say, we help clear the field. I am speaking for law enforcement. But once we have done that, I need to be able to rely on the support mechanisms from youth violence and others to wrap around, to prevent the future violence once we have cleaned it out.

Senator BIDEN. Chief?

Chief McDONALD. Like Mr. Meehan, I would ask you to continue to fund Project Safe Neighborhood. Also to encourage and continue to encourage local law enforcement's working relationship with Federal agencies. We think we in the city of Pittsburgh have an excellent working relationship with ATF, the FBI, the DEA, as well as State agencies and local, county agencies as well as the U.S. Attorney's Office. I think by working together in a coordinated effort we are able to pool our resources with the limited funding that is available. So I would ask you to keep encouraging those efforts.

Senator BIDEN. Jim?

Mr. KANE. We are trying to roll nine into one. Continue to provide the balanced resources that you have had the wisdom to do in the past, ranging from prevention all the way through the sys-

tem to incarceration and aftercare, and also leadership in telling us what works and what does not.

Commissioner JOHNSON. I just came from Sun Valley Saturday from a major city chief conference and the consensus was with all the major city chiefs, and there are 56 of us, is that international terrorism is a problem and we understand that. But domestic terrorism is just as big of a problem and we need funding not just for law enforcement, for all agencies that are going to be proactive to save our children.

Senator BIDEN. Thank you.

Chairman SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Biden. I thank Senator Feinstein and Senator Biden for coming from their home States and from Washington to this hearing, and my colleague Senator Santorum. I thank our distinguished panel of witnesses, Ms. Hart, Ms. Arias, Mr. Flores, Mr. Vallas, Mr. Meehan, Chief McDonald, Mr. Kane, and Commissioner Johnson. I want to acknowledge formally the presence of Congressman Fattah whom I had referred to earlier on the GEAR UP program where he had the idea and my subcommittee had \$2 billion. He had a little of the advantage on that. And also acknowledge the presence of Ms. Ruth Dubois here who has been a leader in drug rehabilitation. She brought her husband, Federal Judge Jan Dubois as well.

In conclusion, let me say that this is just the beginning. We are going to be pursuing the issues which have been raised here with going over the programs nationally which work and discarding the ones which do not. Also, the State of Pennsylvania and there are outstanding questions here which we are going to be pursuing with Mr. Meehan and Chief McDonald. We have asked Commissioner Johnson to help us beyond, and we thank Superintendent Kane for coming and we are going to be studying Superintendent Vallas' compendium.

But this is not going to be a hit-and-run hearing. The Judiciary Committee is going to be following up. We have the authority on reauthorization and authorization to identify programs, and some punch also on the appropriations process. So this is an issue which is beyond challenging. It is daunting. Beyond any question, it is daunting to make any significant inroads in it, but we are determined to do that.

So thank you all for coming and that concludes our hearing. Thank you.

[Applause.]

[Whereupon, at 11:25 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

[Submissions for the record follow.]

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD



**Testimony  
Before the Committee on Judiciary  
United States Senate**

**Prevention of Youth and Gang  
Violence**

*Statement of  
**Ileana Arias, Ph.D.**  
Acting Director,  
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*



For Release on Delivery  
Expected at 9:00 AM  
Monday, June 13, 2005  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Mr. Chairman and other distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (hereafter referred to as CDC). CDC, as part of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is the sentinel agency for health protection for people in the United States and throughout the world. Our efforts to improve health are magnified through strong partnerships with other federal agencies, state and local public health agencies, faith-based and community-based organizations, professional associations, academic institutions, and other stakeholders. This testimony will address CDC's youth violence prevention efforts by (1) giving a background of CDC's youth violence approach; (2) detailing CDC's scientific efforts to understand the causes of youth violence as an emerging health issue; (3) the translation of the scientific data to practical action; and (4) CDC's conclusions.

### **BACKGROUND**

Adolescence is a unique period of life marked by special challenges and opportunities. No longer children and not yet adults, adolescents make choices and develop attitudes and behaviors that can significantly affect their health now and in the future. Preventative measures taken now ensure that today's adolescents will become tomorrow's parents, workforce and leaders, with a future filled with opportunity, productivity, and good health. CDC is taking a coordinated approach to develop and enhance current research and program foci

to shape adolescent prevention strategies into a collaborative and comprehensive program. This ensures the enhancement of our ability to achieve comprehensive health plans and health impact goals for adolescents. The key focus areas for adolescent health addressed at CDC include alcohol use, physical inactivity and nutrition, sexual risk behaviors, tobacco use, unintentional injuries, and violence.

Youth violence has a significant impact on youth, families, and communities. In 2002, more than 877,700 young people ages 1 to 24 were injured from violent acts. Homicide is the second leading cause of death for young people aged 15 to 24 years in the United States and the leading cause of death for African Americans aged 15 to 34 years of age. Although youth violence has declined significantly in recent years, much work remains to reduce this public health burden. As a part of CDC's focus on improving the health of adolescents, reducing homicide among youth remains a top priority for CDC.

#### **UNDERSTANDING THE SCIENCE**

CDC is committed to advancing public health science and programs impacting adolescents. In recognizing the breadth of risk factors and points of intervention, CDC supports research and programs across the full public health spectrum. This includes building resilience in children and youth and reducing risk factors in their families, schools, and communities. CDC research and programmatic

efforts to date have yielded results that demonstrate effective interventions to reduce youth violence at multiple levels of intervention. Some of these efforts include research on parent roles and child maltreatment, home based interventions, drug and alcohol abuse, and school and community factors.

#### Parents' Roles and Child Maltreatment

CDC research demonstrates that parents' role in the development of children and child maltreatment are important precursors to factors that place youth at greater risk of violence as they mature into adolescence. Child maltreatment includes neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse of a child. Early interventions that address child maltreatment and the parents' role in the healthy development of children are a critical aspect of a comprehensive effort to prevent youth violence. Research indicates that parental engagement and monitoring of youth activities, including knowing the child's friends and interacting with the parents of the friends, is a significant protective factor in preventing youth violence. Boys and girls are less likely to be involved in violent behavior when they:

- Are able to discuss problems with parents,
- Believe that their parents have high expectations for school performance,
- Feel connected to their family, and
- Report frequent shared activities with parents.

In addition, both boys and girls are less likely to be involved in violent behavior when at least one parent is consistently present during at least one of the following times: when they wake up in the morning, when they arrive home from school, at evening mealtime, or at bedtime.

Studies show that experiencing or witnessing violence as a child or youth has an impact on future violence experienced and perpetrated across the lifespan. Therefore, early prevention and intervention efforts are critical to preventing youth violence and other forms of violence. Child maltreatment, including abuse and/ or neglect, is traumatic and increases the risk of future adverse consequences among maltreated children, such as early pregnancy, drug abuse, school failure, and mental illness. In addition, children who have been physically abused are also more likely to perpetrate aggressive behavior and violence later in their lives.

#### Interventions—Home Visitation

CDC has identified effective programs for preventing child maltreatment and strengthening families. A systematic review of published studies conducted by the U.S. Task Force on Community Preventive Services with support from CDC found that home visitation programs are effective in reducing child maltreatment among high-risk families. Early childhood home visitation programs are those in which parents and children are visited in their home during the child's first two years of life by trained personnel who provide some combination of the following: information, support, or training regarding child health, development and care.

Early childhood home visitation programs, when implemented by trained nurses, can prevent child maltreatment episodes and risk factors for youth violence by 40% in high-risk families.

#### Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Youth involvement with alcohol or drugs is an important risk factor for youth violence. Children who initiate alcohol or drug use at an early age are likely to be at subsequent risk for violence. In adolescence, alcohol and drug use, including binge drinking and use of multiple substances are far more common among youth involved in serious violence relative to nonviolent youth. Current research suggests an association between frequent substance use and risk for violence. Both the disinhibiting effects of the drugs, and the situational and/or social contexts in which the drugs are being used, purchased, or sold are likely to provide substantial opportunities for conflict and involvement in delinquent and violent behaviors.

#### School and Community Factors

CDC recognizes the value of efforts within schools and outside the school setting especially in communities to target youth violence. CDC research demonstrates that strong connections to school and community protect children and youth from violence. For example, CDC funded the University of Minnesota to examine risk and protective factors for youth violence using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) Survey. The Add Health

Survey is a comprehensive school-based study of the health-related behaviors of adolescents in the United States. During the 1994-1995 school year, over 90,000 adolescents in grades 7 through 12 were surveyed in schools in 80 different communities around the country. A survey was also administered to the school administrators in these communities. More than 20,000 students, randomly chosen from those who participated in the survey and from school rosters, participated in in-home interviews in 1995. A follow-up interview of 15,000 adolescents and a parent (usually their mother), again at home, was conducted between April and August of 1996.

Both boys and girls are less likely to be involved in violent behavior when they:

- Perceive being connected to school,
- Report feeling connected to adults outside of their immediate family, and
- Report feeling safe in their neighborhood.

However, both boys and girls report greater involvement in violence when they perceive prejudice among students in their school, or report having a friend who had attempted or completed suicide. We know that the influence of peers increases substantially as children transition to adolescence. Youth who have weak social connections with conventional peers and those with a history of aggression are likely to form relationships with antisocial peer groups such as gangs. Indeed, one of the strongest predictors of youth involvement in violent behavior, as perpetrators and victims, is affiliation with an antisocial peer group. The peer group influences an adolescent's opportunities for disputes as well as

norms and beliefs about how disputes should be handled. Youth who become affiliated with a gang are at particular risk for involvement in more frequent and more severe violence.

CDC is identifying ways to strengthen positive connections at schools by reducing risky behaviors associated with violence and promoting the use of problem-solving behaviors. For example, a CDC-supported evaluation at Columbia University found that a school-based program reduces risk behaviors for youth violence by promoting positive problem-solving behaviors by targeting interpersonal processes known to predict later involvement in aggressive and violent behavior. The evaluation of the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program conducted by Columbia University's Academic Center of Excellence for Youth Violence Prevention found significant behavior changes in youth participating in the program and decreased violent behavior and increased academic achievement in the young people who participated. Because of its success in reducing youth violence and increasing community participation and problem solving, this program is being used in 15 other school districts around the country. Economic evaluation shows these positive impacts can be achieved for just \$98 per young person per year.

In another example, CDC funded Peace Builders, an elementary (K-5) school-based project in Arizona, designed to reduce physical and verbal aggression by creating a "culture of peace" within the school environment. Throughout the school year, counselors or other specially trained instructors used various

methods such as praising others, avoiding insults, seeking the advice of older persons, and speaking up about hurt feelings to teach students to interact socially in a positive way. The evaluation showed significant increases in better social interactions and reductions in aggressive behavior among children in Peace Builder intervention schools compared with youth in non-intervention schools. Peace Builders was also successful in modifying the school climate so staff, teachers, and youth felt safer and part of a more productive learning environment. Finally, in a separate assessment conducted during the first year of program implementation, injuries related to fighting (recorded from visits to the school nurse's office) declined slightly in participating schools but rose significantly in non-participating schools.

#### **TRANSLATING SCIENCE INTO ACTION**

CDC's work is valuable only if it can be applied in families, schools, and communities to have a positive impact. CDC believes the most important work to be done in youth violence prevention is translating what we know to work based on our science into effective community programs and services. A priority for CDC is the implementation of research findings into different communities with different needs. This approach involves a solution that is multi-sectorial and multi-factorial, drawing together all the resources that each has to offer.

To ensure that effective strategies are distilled and disseminated for community use, CDC compiled *Best Practices of Youth Violence Prevention: A Sourcebook for Community Action*. This resource provides communities with strategies for developing, implementing, and evaluating violence prevention programs. The sourcebook presents four key strategies for preventing youth violence: school-based programs, mentoring programs, parenting and family-based programs, and home visiting. It builds upon lessons learned from the first CDC-funded evaluation projects and draws upon the expertise of more than 100 of the nation's leading scientists and practitioners in this field.

Also, CDC has developed "*School Health Guidelines to Prevent Unintentional Injuries and Violence*." These guidelines identify the school health program strategies most likely to be effective in reducing unintentional injuries and violence among young people. This document, which was developed by CDC in collaboration with other federal agencies, state agencies, universities, voluntary organizations, and professional organizations, is based on extensive reviews of research literature.

Furthermore, CDC continues to encourage cross agency collaboration to explore approaches that can be developed by working collectively in areas such as violence, injuries, tobacco, and alcohol. Violence and aggressive risk-taking behavior underlie many of the health problems that manifest or begin during adolescence and CDC continues to examine areas of potential synergy among

the various programs to address youth violence. Since all of these programs are in some way trying to influence adolescent behavior in a positive way and often are working with the same groups such as parents and schools, increased collaboration may likewise increase effectiveness of youth violence prevention efforts.

### CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, CDC's scientific work and other evidence from the field, support the need for an initiation of comprehensive efforts to prevent youth violence in high-risk communities across the country beginning during infancy and continuing through adolescence. Best science supports the benefits of beginning during infancy with home visitation and parenting programs that promote healthy development. During the childhood years opportunities exist to teach problem-solving skills in schools and other community settings such as faith-based organizations, Boys and Girls Clubs or YMCAs. Parenting programs should be continued through childhood and adolescence. As children move into adolescence, mentoring programs with adult supervision and intensive efforts to keep adolescents in schools and on track with their education should be emphasized. These programs, supported by healthy environments, can strengthen and empower communities in creating an atmosphere of trust and connectivity of the youth to their communities, thereby changing norms that support violence. The intramural and extramural work supported by CDC

focuses on identifying effective or promising strategies to prevent youth violence and then translating those into action through the advancement of public health science and programs impacting adolescents.

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you to discuss some of CDC's efforts to prevent youth violence. Congress' support has allowed CDC to make great strides in the identification of the risk factors facing our nation's youth and the prevention of youth violence.

We look forward to working on these and additional challenges in the future and we look forward to responding to any questions you may have.



# Department of Justice

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STATEMENT

OF

J. ROBERT FLORES  
ADMINISTRATOR  
OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
UNITED STATES SENATE

CONCERNING

YOUTH VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGIES

PRESENTED ON

JUNE 13, 2005

**TESTIMONY OF  
J. ROBERT FLORES  
ADMINISTRATOR  
OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**BEFORE  
THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**JUNE 13, 2005**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am J. Robert Flores, Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) within the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs. I am pleased to have the opportunity to testify today about the current state of violence and juvenile crime in our major cities. You will note that my colleague, NIJ Director Sarah Hart, discussed the importance of comprehensive approaches to addressing youth violence. I would emphasize that OJJDP advocates and employs a comprehensive approach to addressing juvenile justice issues with the goal of providing today's youth with opportunities for a better tomorrow.

We recognize that here in the City of Philadelphia, citizens have been faced with the tragic reality of innocent children being caught in the crossfire of rival gangs. Unfortunately, citizens in other major cities have also buried children due to similar circumstances, and often times these harsh and unacceptable crimes leave communities with a sense of hopelessness.

Today, I would like to provide you with current information on juvenile crime and delinquency and describe some of the efforts our agency has in place both here in Philadelphia and throughout the nation.

**Research on Causes of Delinquency**

Through research and evaluation, we have advanced our knowledge about what leads to juvenile violence and delinquency. We also know something about how to prevent and address it. Violence prevention and intervention efforts hinge on the identification of risk and protective factors and the determination of when they emerge during child development. By risk factor, we mean those things that predict later offending. By protective factor, we mean those things that may provide a buffer between the presence of risk factors and the onset of delinquency. Risk and protective factors are present in five domains: individual, family, school, peer group, and community. Although researchers use risk factors to detect the likelihood of later offending, many youth with multiple risk factors never commit delinquent or violent acts. A risk factor may increase the probability of offending, but does not make offending a certainty.

Since 1986, OJJDP has sponsored three longitudinal studies—collectively referred to as the Program of Research on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency—designed to improve understanding of serious delinquency, violence, and drug use by examining how individual juveniles develop within the context of family, school, peers, and communities. These studies, as well as a number of other key longitudinal studies, have identified several common findings which can inform our understanding of delinquency and juvenile violence.

One of the most consistent findings across the studies on delinquency is that the earlier ages at which children begin offending, the more likely they are to have chronic and serious delinquency careers. This underscores the need to intervene early, even before children enter school and reinforces the need for prevention programs. The longitudinal studies have also verified that there are multiple pathways that lead to delinquent behavior and these pathways progress in an orderly fashion. Researchers have identified three distinct developmental pathways: authority conflict (e.g., defiance and running away); covert actions (e.g., lying and stealing); and overt actions (e.g., aggressive and violent behavior). Individuals may proceed along single or multiple developmental pathways toward serious antisocial behavior. The research indicates there are opportunities for intervention and we must take advantage of these opportunities. Early warning signs of disruptive behaviors must not be dismissed. Rather than assuming that these behaviors will pass, teachers, parents, and mental health practitioners need to recognize that disruptive behavior should be taken seriously. Interventions are more successful if the child has not already begun moving along pathways toward more serious delinquent activity.

Many of the findings from these studies have enabled OJJDP over the past several years to bring together distinguished panels of researchers and experts to collaboratively examine the most current research, developmental literature and effective prevention and intervention programs for key groups of juvenile offenders. The first was OJJDP's Study Group for Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders. One of the key findings - that most chronic juvenile offenders begin their delinquency careers before age 12 and some as early as age 10 - led OJJDP to establish its Study Group on Very Young Offenders (offending by children younger than age 13). The findings of these Study Groups have been widely published and there are Fact Sheets and Bulletins which summarize the findings and provide guidelines for communities and practitioners. The publications are available through our website at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ojjdp](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ojjdp). Our most recent Study Group, which began last year, is on girls. This Group was initiated in response to concerns regarding an increase in juvenile female offending and arrests.

#### **Recent Trends in Juvenile Offending and Victimization**

Through a grant to the National Center for Juvenile Justice in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, OJJDP compiles a complete set of informational data pertaining to the juvenile justice field. Reports from OJJDP's Statistical Briefing Book are constantly updated and in early 2006, a new National Report on Juvenile Offenders and Victims will be released.

With regard to juvenile crime, the latest available national arrest statistics reveal that juvenile offending is declining. The substantial growth in juvenile violent crime arrests that began in the late 1980s peaked in 1994. In 2003, juvenile arrests for violence were the lowest since 1987, and juvenile arrests for property crimes were the lowest in three decades. Specifically, the juvenile arrest rate for Violent Crime Index offenses – murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault – fell 48 percent between 1994 and 2003. Additionally, juvenile arrests for Property Crime Index offenses – burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson – dropped 46 percent, to its lowest level since the 1970s.

A very small percentage of juveniles commit these violent and property crimes. About one-third of one percent of all juveniles ages 10-17 living in the U.S. were arrested for a violent crime offense in 2003. The proportion of property crime offenses resolved by the police that involved juveniles in 2003 was 19 percent – the lowest level since 1980.

With regard to victimization, the rate of nonfatal crimes against youth ages 12-18 occurring away from school fell about 60 percent between 1992 and 2001; while the violent rate in school fell about 40 percent. Over the same period, the rate of theft against students ages 12-18 fell about 50 percent, both in and out of school.

Juveniles were much less likely to be victims of violent crime in 2002 than in 1993. After peaking in 1993, the serious violent crime victimization rate for juveniles ages 12-17 fell substantially – dropping 75 percent by 2002. In addition, the number of juveniles murdered in 2003 was the lowest since 1984. In 1993, an estimated 2,880 juveniles were murdered in the U.S. The 2003 figure (1,550) is 46 percent below the peak year of 1993.

#### **Why Has Juvenile Crime Gone Down?**

Recognizing that the national data indicate a continuing drop in juvenile crime and victimization is good news for the nation, though it does not answer the questions of the people in neighborhoods of our major cities who have experienced and are still experiencing the horrors of violent crime. To provide answers and solutions, OJJDP is working to understand more about why juvenile crime increased in the 1990s and why it has dropped since then. This work is helping us understand how to combat juvenile crime in those neighborhoods and cities that are still seeing high levels of delinquency, and may even be seeing an increase.

OJJDP funds a multi-year research project led by the University of Pennsylvania—based right here in Philadelphia—which is called “Understanding and Monitoring the “Whys” Behind Juvenile Crime Trends.” The project has two complimentary aims: 1) to explain the significant downturn in most measures of violent juvenile crime that began around 1993 following a large increase between about 1986 and about 1992; and 2) to develop tools that local practitioners can use to predict turning points in their juvenile crime trends, based on locally available data, and use this

information strategically to develop responsive prevention and intervention strategies. I would like to summarize some of the information that has been learned to date because it has particular relevance to this hearing.

Detailed analyses of the trends in serious violence indicate the following regarding the increases (from the late 1980s to the mid 1990s) and decreases (from about 1994 to 2000) in serious violent offending behavior based on victims reports from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey and arrest statistics:

- Rates of serious violent offending among juveniles increased more than adults in the late 1980s and decreased more than adults (including 18- 20 year olds) in the middle 1990s.
- The decrease in serious violent offending was concentrated among black juveniles more than white juveniles, and accounted for the bulk of the decrease in juvenile offending during the period - 65 percent of the overall decline in juvenile arrests for serious violence compared to 33 percent for whites.
- The trends in juvenile offending by *gender* differed in police (i.e., arrest statistics) and survey statistics (i.e., victims' reports of juvenile offenders). Specifically, while the percentage increase in the juvenile *arrest rates* for serious violence was greater for females (up 122 percent) between 1984 and 1993 than it was for males (up 59 percent), the *decrease* in offending rates was steeper in females (84 percent) than for males (69 percent). In spite of the steeper decrease in offending behaviors, female arrests did not decline as sharply as for males, leaving questions about the disproportionate handling of female delinquency cases.

Following are observations about the trends:

- First, the decline in group offending has been much greater than the decline in lone offending by juveniles and much greater for co-offending with other juveniles, than for co-offending with adults. Again, the decline in juvenile co-offending was much greater for black juveniles than for whites. This is significant since most (three-quarters) of juvenile offending is done either with adults (1/3), or with other juveniles (1/2). Over the period 1993 to 1998, juvenile co-offending with other juveniles declined more (67 percent) than co-offending with adults (47 percent) and lone offending (42 percent). Most notably, co-offending with juveniles declined 90 percent for blacks and only 29 percent for whites.
- Second, a related change in the nature of juvenile offending has been the decrease in perceived gang offending. The decline in juvenile offending with perceived gang involvement dropped (from 32 percent in 1993 to 18 percent in 2000), accounting for 42 percent of the drop in juvenile offending during the period.
- Third, the use of firearms in serious violent offending decreased from 1993 to 2000. This was observed both in the homicide data and the victim survey data.

- Fourth, while the declines were found to be pervasive across the country, some communities ran counter to the national trends. Notably, the decline in homicide is concentrated more in large, urban places. The search for explanations found tremendous variation in violent juvenile crime arrest patterns within jurisdictions. In Seattle, for example, 15 percent of the street segments (blocks) accounted for 90 percent of the drop in violent crime.

The initial explanations for these findings are promising, and identifying a small group of "hot kids in hot spots" explains a lot about jurisdiction and possibly national-level trends. Understanding and predicting juvenile crime trends depends on understanding the developmental pathways of these juveniles, the functioning of their families, and the social, economic, educational, enforcement conditions in their immediate neighborhoods. Also, changes in neighborhood characteristics offer intriguing clues to the drop in crime. Contrary to expectations, immigrant concentration was inversely related to the juvenile crime drop, while residential stability had a positive association with juvenile crime. For example, counties with increases in immigrant concentration tended to have decreases (or smaller increases) in juvenile crime, while those with increases in residential stability tended to have increases (or smaller decreases) in juvenile crime. In addition, changes in community poverty concentration acted as an accelerant to juvenile crime change when combined with changes in community stability and key demographics.

#### **OJJDP Prevention and Intervention Programs and Tools**

I now want to address the ways in which OJJDP is working hard to continue the positive national trends by developing and supporting research-based programs and innovative strategies.

In an effort to provide guidance to the juvenile justice field on research-based proven programs, OJJDP has provided funding for several years to promote replication and ongoing evaluation of programs under the Blueprints for Violence Prevention Initiative. Given limited resources, communities seek to ensure that the programs they implement produce the desired results. The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado at Boulder, with funding from the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, identified programs that effectively reduce juvenile violence, aggression, delinquency, and substance abuse. After rigorously reviewing more than 600 programs, the Blueprints initiative identified 11 "model" programs and 21 "promising" programs. To further assess the effectiveness of the Blueprints programs, OJJDP funded replications of some of the model and promising programs. Following are two examples:

- The Nurse-Family Partnership program (model program) – nurses visit low-income, first-time mothers during pregnancy and continue visits until the child is 2 years old. The program helps reduce risk for early antisocial behavior and helps

prevent child abuse, maternal substance abuse, and maternal criminal involvement, all of which are problems associated with youth crime. Research also indicates that because the program focuses on low-income women, government funding costs are recovered by the time a woman's first child reaches age four, primarily because of a reduced number of subsequent pregnancies and related reductions in use of government subsistence programs.

- Life Skills Training (LST) (model program) - a three-year intervention designed to prevent or reduce gateway drug use (i.e., tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana), primarily implemented in school classrooms by school teachers. The program consists of three major components which teach students (1) general self-management skills, (2) social skills, and (3) information and skills specifically related to resisting drug use. Skills are taught using training techniques such as instruction, demonstration, feedback, reinforcement, and practice. LST has been found to cut tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana use 50 to 75 percent, and long-term follow-up results observed six years following the intervention show that LST cuts polydrug use up to 66 percent; reduces pack-a-day smoking by 25 percent; and decreases use of inhalants, narcotics, and hallucinogens.

As demonstrated by these and other programs, prevention programs are one of the most effective and cost-effective methods for reducing juvenile delinquency. The cost benefits from prevention programming are being measured. For example, we now know that underage drinking cost U.S. citizens an estimated \$61.9 billion in 2001. Violence (homicide, suicide, aggravated assault) and traffic crashes represent the largest costs – but not the only ones. Fetal alcohol syndrome associated with teenage pregnancies, also cost the country \$925.6 million in 2001.

In addition, research from the Rand Corporation has shown that programs steering young people from wrongdoing can prevent as many as 250 crimes per \$1 million spent, and that the cost of early intervention alternatives offsets the costs of sending high-risk youth to prison in the future.

Through **OJJDP's Title V Community Prevention Grants Program**, states are encouraged to work with local communities in focusing on risk and protective factors and implementing research-based programming. The Title V program is currently the only federal funding source dedicated solely to delinquency prevention, in contrast with other OJJDP funding sources that are juvenile justice system-focused or suppression-focused. Because a state or local government is required to provide a 50 percent cash or in-kind match for each Title V grant, the level of community ownership of, and investment in, these programs is significant and has contributed to the overall success of the Title V program.

The **Juvenile and Family Drug Court Programs** are a recent addition to OJJDP's grant portfolio. As I am certain the Committee is aware, substance abuse is one of the most troubling problems facing the nation's youth, with inextricable links

between substance abuse and more serious delinquency, more numerous risk behaviors, and poor academic performance. In short, substance abuse disrupts young lives and limits potential. Many youth in the justice system have substance use disorders, and 197,100 of the approximately 2.2 million juvenile arrests in 2003 were for drug charges (which is an increase of 4 percent from 2002 to 2003). Although there is an overall decline in juvenile arrests, as I reported earlier, when it comes to juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations and for driving under the influence of alcohol, there have been significant increases. The drug court programs will help OJJDP to address drug and drug-related crime through the innovative use of comprehensive supervision, drug testing, judicial monitoring, sanctions, and incentives.

OJJDP also sponsors a number of programs that support the efforts of states and communities nationwide to prevent and reduce youth substance abuse. The cornerstones of these programs are evidence-based strategies – finding approaches that work and making them available to communities – in addition to collaborating with other federal agencies. For example, a project known as The Promising Programs for Substance Abuse Prevention: Replication and Evaluation Initiative, is implementing two school-based models – Project ALERT and Project SUCCESS – in 28 and 14 schools, respectively, to determine whether positive outcomes can be achieved and sustained over time.

As President Bush has highlighted, one of the most important partners in strengthening communities and helping disadvantaged youth is the faith and community-based organizations. The Office of Justice Programs, through OJJDP, has undertaken a number of efforts to partner with faith and community-based organizations. Building a web-based capacity for members of the faith community to participate in local mentoring efforts is one example. The National Network of Youth Ministries operates [www.youthworkers.net](http://www.youthworkers.net) to educate individuals about evidence-based and effective mentoring practices. The site also has a mechanism which allows local community mentoring organizations to register with the network and receive assistance in recruiting volunteers.

OJJDP also has numerous training and technical assistance efforts that are important tools for all communities to access. Through our Web site - [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ojjdp](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ojjdp) - communities can gain access to what is available throughout the nation. One tool, in particular, I want to point out is OJJDP's Strategic Planning Tool, an online resource developed as part of the Office's Gang Reduction Program. It uses the latest technology to help communities identify service gaps and develop cost-effective cross-agency solutions to gang or other juvenile justice problems.

#### **Youth Gangs and Violent Crime**

As noted previously, only a very small percentage of juveniles commit violent crimes. Research indicates that many of the violent juveniles committing the crimes are gang members. As evidenced by the death of Faheem Thomas-Childs here in

Philadelphia, gang-related homicides remain a serious problem, particularly in large cities. Consistently, gang membership has proven to be one of the strongest independent predictors of violent, property, weapons, and drug offenses. According to the annual National Youth Gang Survey, conducted through OJJDP's National Youth Gang Center, local law enforcement reports that gangs have had a persistent presence in every U.S. city with a population of 250,000 or more since 1996 when the survey began. In addition, while prevalence rates of gang activity remained relatively stable from 1996 to 2003, for areas with ongoing gang problems, those agencies reporting their gang problem as "getting worse" rose from 25 percent in 1999 to 37 percent in 2003. Looking at the latest overall numbers (2002), the U.S. has approximately 731,500 gang members and 21,500 active gangs.

OJJDP sponsors a variety of programs and activities to advance the nation's ability to prevent and respond to youth gang problems. There are currently four pilot sites in the **Gang Reduction Program** and four demonstration sites in our **Gang-Free Schools and Communities Project**, which includes Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The framework for these efforts is known as OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Model. It is based on the work of Dr. Irving Spergel and operates in two distinct phases: (1) assessment of the community's gang problem and development of an implementation plan; (2) launch of service delivery and system change efforts by the sites. OJJDP also works with the national Boys and Girls Clubs of America on the **Gang Prevention through Targeted Outreach Program**. This effort helps local affiliate clubs prevent youth from joining gangs, intervenes with gang members in the early stages of gang involvement, and diverts youth from gangs into more constructive activities.

The **Pittsburgh Gang-Free Schools and Communities Project** has provided us with a noteworthy success story. The project intervened following an incident in which a 14-year old girl was fatally shot as she rode in a car with a friend. The incident ignited a series of coordinated activities to prevent retaliatory gang violence. The project coordinator worked closely with schools, police, probation, outreach workers, and social services to quickly identify suspects in the initial shooting and those who were already planning retaliation. Suspects were arrested and given mental health assessments. Probation and outreach staff worked on the streets with gang-involved clients and their families to provide victim support and to demonstrate that likely sources of retaliation were known and would not be tolerated. No retaliation has occurred since the initial event in July 2004.

I want to point out that our anti-gang efforts are in partnership with the U.S. Attorneys, our sister agencies in the Justice Department, as well as with other federal agencies, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Health and Human Services. The individual projects are also coordinated with existing DOJ Project Safe Neighborhood efforts and Serious and Violent Reentry Initiative programs.

OJJDP's specific effort with the juvenile portion of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative provides funding to state juvenile justice agencies to develop,

implement, enhance, and evaluate reentry strategies that will ensure the safety of community and reduction of serious, violent crime. Through the initiative, targeted offenders are prepared to successfully return to their communities after having served a significant period of secure confinement in a state training school, juvenile or adult correctional facility, or other secure institution.

### **Projects in Philadelphia**

I am pleased to report that a coordinated and highly-motivated effort in Philadelphia, the Youth Violence Reduction Partnership (YVRP), with which you are familiar, is partially funded through an OJJDP grant. We are aware of the expansion of YVRP resulting in the “Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia,” and we are willing to continue assisting with the implementation of the Blueprint, as appropriate.

OJJDP is currently also supporting projects throughout Philadelphia, representing an investment of over \$21 million in the area of violence and delinquency prevention. The Pathways to Desistance Project has a site in Philadelphia as part of a collaborative research project that follows approximately 1,200 serious juvenile offenders from adolescence to young adulthood. Preliminary findings show a strong association between parenting style and offending, with a high degree of variability in parenting styles even among serious juvenile offenders. Substance abuse is another key factor, with over 30 percent of both males and female youth meeting diagnostic thresholds for alcohol and/or substance abuse dependence. In other words, involvement with substances is a very important risk factor for continued offending. Other programs include the Philadelphia Safe and Sound project and our work with the Big Brothers, Big Sisters (BBBS) Association of Philadelphia. Safe and Sound reaches out to youth in three communities who are identified by police and probation officers as most at risk to kill or be killed. BBBS plays a significant role in providing one-to-one mentoring, helping Philadelphia’s youth to avoid peer pressure, instill confidence, and develop a positive self-image.

### **Summary**

Although the crimes being committed in major cities throughout the country cause us to yearn for a quick solution to violent behavior, we are at a point where we do have an abundance of tools, the wisdom of longitudinal research, and the technological advances to help parents and community leaders see positive changes occur. Our challenge is to determine how to best use the available tools, plan according to the latest research findings, and utilize current technology, such as crime mapping.

Violent victimization and violent offending share many of the same risk factors, such as previous violent victimization and offending, drug and alcohol use, and depression. Juveniles who have support from friends, parents, teachers, and others are less likely to commit a violent offense. These findings suggest that interventions directed at preventing victimization could also reduce offending (and vice versa) and that interaction with peers and adults play an important role in the lives of juveniles. It is

critical to understand and address these links between victimization of youth and future violence, if our goal is to prevent future delinquency.

Mr. Chairman, I can assure you that OJJDP and the Department of Justice look forward to continuing to work with you and the Committee on utilizing every resource we have to help prevent juvenile crime. We are also committed to First Lady Laura Bush's initiative focused on helping America's at-risk youth reach their full potential, as well as the President's new initiative to reach youth at-risk of gang influence and involvement. These efforts represent additional opportunities to help those communities across our country that are most in need. Our Office has been working in collaboration with other Federal agencies through the President and First Lady's efforts to ensure that the Office of Justice Programs' resources to address crime can be leveraged.

Regardless of the "good news" about juvenile crime trends, as a nation we must maintain our vigilance in making all communities safe. Until the broader success of the nation is felt in every community, we cannot afford to rest. Our children's lives depend upon it.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today and I will be pleased to answer any questions.



# Department of Justice

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STATEMENT

OF

SARAH V. HART  
DIRECTOR  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
UNITED STATES SENATE

CONCERNING

YOUTH VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGIES

PRESENTED ON

JUNE 13, 2005

**Statement of  
Sarah V. Hart  
Director  
National Institute of Justice  
Department of Justice**

**before the  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate**

**Concerning  
Youth Violence Reduction Strategies**

**Presented on  
June 13, 2005**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Sarah V. Hart and I am the Director of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). NIJ is the research, development and evaluation arm of the United States Department of Justice (DOJ). Our primary mission is to research criminal justice issues on behalf of state and local governments.

Mr. Chairman, it is an honor to testify before you today and in the City of Philadelphia, my hometown. I thank you for holding this important hearing on the issue of youth violence and for inviting me to testify about research sponsored by DOJ over the past two decades in the areas of juvenile crime and violence. DOJ through NIJ and its sister agencies of OJP, has a long history of supporting research relating to local efforts to reduce gun crime. We sponsored the Boston Ceasefire effort, as well as similar efforts in other major cities. We look forward to providing the Committee with research findings to inform criminal justice policies and practices in order to address emerging crime issues. The following is a summary of the research and evaluation evidence that relates to the issues being examined at the hearing.

**Introduction**

The Committee has asked that I address research and evaluation findings that indicate what works for reducing violence such as the violence now being experienced in Philadelphia. My testimony will focus on short-term and long-term strategies for reducing violent youth crime.

Short-term interventions focus on local circumstances in order to reduce or disrupt opportunities for crime, increase the probability that offenders will be caught and punished, and communicate these changes to potential offenders. These interventions usually respond to current problems and seek to reduce crime and disorder that can worsen over time.

Longer-term interventions tend to focus more broadly on factors in the home, school and neighborhood that tend to put children at risk for becoming involved in crime. They also provide intensive treatment for youthful offenders in order to deflect them from a life of crime. Long-term strategies invest in at-risk youth in order to maximize their potential and reduce the proportion of young people whose lives, freedom and fortunes are lost to crime.

In a world of constrained resources, policy makers usually seek to strike the right balance between short- and long-term crime reduction strategies. In making these determinations, policy makers often want to know the cost-effectiveness of particular policy options and the overall costs and benefits of investing in a particular strategy. While much still needs to be learned about which programs and practices work best and are cost effective, great progress has been made over the last two decades through scientific research sponsored by DOJ and other federal agencies. For example, we now have growing evidence that geographically focused police strategies that are tailored carefully to address well-defined problems work well – especially when they result from problem-solving collaborations among all the key players in a community. We have also made significant progress in identifying effective prevention and intervention programs for violence. In addition to a growing understanding of what works, the even more difficult question of which programs and practices are most cost effective has begun to yield to careful evaluation studies and econometric analyses.

### **Addressing Youth Violence in Philadelphia**

#### **Scope of the Problem in Philadelphia**

First, it is important to note that while Philadelphia and some other cities are struggling with increases in youth violence, nationwide these problems are trending downward, with reductions in both youth violent offending and victimization rates. Encouraging early results from large-scale cooperative projects such as Project Safe Neighborhoods in St. Louis, Lowell, Mass, Winston-Salem and High Point, N.C., Indianapolis, Chicago, and Rochester suggest some promising strategies that can help Philadelphia tackle the outbreak of violence successfully.

A broad coalition of federal, state and local law enforcement officials, as well as representatives from several community agencies, has developed a “Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia” designed to respond to recent increases in violent crime in the city. As the document notes, homicides in the city have risen in recent years after an earlier decline. Most of the homicides involve firearms and nearly 90 percent of the victims are African-American – most of them between 18 and 20 years old. A majority of the defendants in these cases are between 18 and 24 years of age.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Philadelphia homicide statistics, if projected for the entire year, indicate an increase in the rate of homicides for 2005. Crime mapping analytical tools indicate that many of

<sup>1</sup> This year the Pennsylvania Commission to Address Gun Violence also issued a report to the Pennsylvania Governor on gun violence issues in Pennsylvania.

these homicides are clustered in particular Philadelphia neighborhoods.

These crimes are exemplified by the tragic shooting death of Faheem Thomas-Childs, a local third-grader who was shot in the forehead in February 2004 when he was caught in the crossfire of two rival drug gangs while crossing the street to attend school. This and several similar homicides have generated an outcry against gun violence in the city. Unchecked, the recent spate of shootings in particular areas of Philadelphia victimize the community beyond the immediate victims. Exposure to such violence undermines the very community capacities necessary to help local residents work with authorities to regain control over their streets. In addition, those who witness such violence are at increased risk of committing violence themselves.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Importance of Locally Focused Problem-Solving Approaches**

Because crime problems usually vary by city, a problem-solving partnership that attempts to match the solution to the problem is the most promising approach, especially when combined with an action-research model in which researchers work with practitioners to help target their responses scientifically. The current wave of youth homicide in Philadelphia seems reminiscent of two different homicide waves faced earlier, in New York between the late 1980s and early 1990, and in Boston during the 1990s. While both of these homicide surges were concentrated in particular local areas, the nature of these two local problems was different, and they seemed to yield to different approaches.

New York. In New York, the surge in youth homicide seems to have been driven by the volatile nexus of drug markets, firearms, and young drug-sellers<sup>3</sup>, with an arms race among warring drug dealers becoming more and more violent. This was aggravated by the entry of ever younger drug sellers into the market. These younger drug sellers were even less inhibited about using firearms than the older dealers whom they had replaced.

This homicide epidemic was eventually reined in by a combination of aggressive police practices to deter illegal gun possession, and the closure (or movement indoors) of the drug markets. Researchers have also pointed to economic forces<sup>4</sup> and shifts in attitude by a younger cohort who did not want to repeat the lethal drug-trade experience of their older brothers.<sup>5</sup>

Boston. In Boston, the surge in homicide seems to have been driven by gang warfare and the bulk of homicides were committed by a small number of youth. The Boston Ceasefire program seems to have been effective primarily because it focused very

<sup>2</sup> Bingenheimer, J. B., Brennan, R. T., & Earls, F. J. (2005). Firearm violence exposure and serious violent behavior. *Science*, 308, 1323-1326, who estimate that witnessing one (or more) firearms incident approximately *doubles* the risk that the witness will commit violence.

<sup>3</sup> Blumstein, A. (2002). Youth, Guns, and Violent Crime, *Future of Children*, 12 (2), 39 – 53.

<sup>4</sup> Blumstein, A. & Wallman, J., (Eds.) (2000). *The Crime Drop in America*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Golub, A.L. & Johnson, B.D. (1997). Crack's Decline: Some Surprises Across U.S. Cities. *NIJ Research in Brief*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

strong surveillance and deterrence on a small number of recognized gang members.<sup>6</sup> |

Thus, unlike New York (where the homicide phenomenon was driven by local dynamics of the competitive open-air drug markets rather than by particular individuals), the Boston homicide phenomenon was driven by a few violent gang members acting in a series of gang conflicts. These different dynamics then yielded to different approaches.

#### **Short-Term Interventions: Problem-Solving Law Enforcement Partnerships**

In the last decade, local problem-solving approaches involving partnerships between law enforcement, prosecutors and other criminal justice professionals who worked closely with researchers have succeeded in reducing violence in a number of sites. Examples include the Boston Ceasefire project as well as DOJ's current Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) initiative to reduce gun violence in all 94 U.S. Attorney districts. Although there is growing evidence that problem-solving policing is an effective approach<sup>7</sup>, the empirical evidence still is being developed.<sup>8</sup>

These problem-solving approaches attempt to tailor a comprehensive local effort to the unique characteristics of a problem such as youth violence by using a variety of strategies. These approaches also involve local research partners who use geographic analytical techniques to focus their efforts on "hot spots" of crime and violence. (Although most of these approaches have been focused on legal adults, the majority of violent criminals in all cities fall within the 18-to 30-year-old age range.) Some of the most promising violence-reduction components used in these problem-solving efforts have been incorporated into PSN, and are briefly described here:<sup>9</sup>

- **Homicide and Violence Incident Reviews.** Knowledgeable participants from diverse criminal justice agencies – police patrol, gang unit officers and detectives; probation/parole officers; local and federal prosecutors – meet regularly to discuss new serious violent incidents. A local research partner examines patterns and similarities across cases to provide insight into the specific types of violence present in their community, this information is then used to tailor interventions more effectively.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> A detailed report on the Boston Ceasefire Project and its strategies has been published by NIJ and is available from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service. NCJS #188471

<sup>7</sup> National Research Council (2004). *Fairness and Effectiveness in Policing: The Evidence*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. (p. 247, recommendation 4).

<sup>8</sup> e.g., National Research Council (2004). *Fairness and Effectiveness in Policing: The Evidence*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. (p. 9, recommendation 6).

<sup>9</sup> Detailed reports on several of these strategies are being developed for PSN by NIJ and will be available in the near future. Program reports on most of the SACSI sites have been completed and are available online at [www.ncjrs.org](http://www.ncjrs.org).

<sup>10</sup> Findings from several PSN districts show this to be a promising strategy and NIJ is currently conducting a comprehensive evaluation of its implementation and impact in Milwaukee. A detailed description of this strategy, and its implementation and effects in certain PSN districts, has been developed by the NIJ component of PSN and will be available shortly.

- Chronic Violent Offender Lists. Individuals at the highest risk for violent offending are targeted for special enforcement and deterrence strategies. Lists are created by partnering criminal justice agencies using common criteria (e.g., multiple arrests for serious violence, gun violence arrests, or gang violence incidents). Disseminating such a list to all relevant law enforcement, probation/parole, and prosecution agencies helps concentrate their attention on those offenders most at risk for future serious violence. The existence of this list also can be communicated to gangs and other offenders to deter them from engaging in serious violence. The increased enforcement attention acts as motivator to “avoid getting one’s name on the list” and also signals to targeted individuals that they are under close surveillance.
- Gun Violence Case Screening for Prosecution. Assistant U.S. Attorneys meet regularly with their counterparts in state’s attorney, district attorney and/or city attorney offices to review all cases involving illegal gun possession or violence. All of the prosecution options for each case are examined so that it can be prosecuted by whichever office has the maximum sentencing sanctions. In states with less strict firearms laws, this may mean that the U.S. Attorney’s office will take the case or, in other states with strict gun laws, the case might be referred to the local district attorney for prosecution. Once again, broadcasting the severity of sanctions received by violent gang members or other youth can also help deter potential gun offenders.
- Violent Offender Notification Meetings. This innovative deterrence strategy was first employed against gang members in the Boston Ceasefire Project and currently is being used in a number of PSN districts. High-risk offenders are assembled to meet with an array of criminal justice, social service, and community agency representatives at all levels of government. Attendees are explicitly warned by criminal justice officials that future violence and illegal gun possession/use will be targeted for strict enforcement (all sanctioning “levers” will be pulled) and examples are presented of severe sanctions received by previous offenders from their neighborhoods. In addition, meetings with gang members emphasize that violence by any single member will be met by intensive enforcement against all members of the group, motivating the gang to exercise its own internal social controls. Then, social service and community officials present an array of positive alternatives to violence and offer education/GED assistance, drug treatment, employment, counseling, and other services to those willing to change their lives.<sup>11</sup>
- Police/Probation Teams. Line-level patrol officers pair with probation officers to

<sup>11</sup> This strategy was evaluated as part of NIJ’s Boston Ceasefire evaluation and findings showed that, in combination with other strategies, Offender Notification Meetings were effective in contributing to a 63% reduction in youth homicides in Boston and a 44% reduction in youth gun assaults in the target area. NIJ is currently funding another evaluation of two types of meetings in Indianapolis and findings from this study should be available shortly. Finally, the NIJ component of PSN is currently completing a detailed report describing this strategy in detail, highlighting characteristics of successful programs, and presenting examples of its implementation and effects in Boston, Indianapolis, and other PSN sites.

make home visits to particularly violent youth and their families and engage in intensive enforcement activities. Where appropriate, warrants are served, homes are searched for guns and drugs, and the combined authority of the two agencies is brought to bear on these youthful offenders, both to enforce laws currently being broken and to deter them from future violence. In one site, a member of the local clergy accompanied the team, as well, to underscore community support for non-violence and to serve as a liaison to social services. It is important to note that successful community-based crime prevention efforts such as Boston's Project Ceasefire often make use of faith-based resources to strengthen their impact.

In conjunction with these strategies for short term crime control, NIJ also is conducting intensive research on the potential effectiveness of prison reentry programs that attempt to prevent crime by increasing the likelihood that released offenders will make a successful transition to community life.

#### **Long-Term Approaches: Prevention**

While short-term problem-oriented policing strategies are often necessary to remedy immediate problems, long-term prevention approaches are also necessary.

Overview. Research on prevention and intervention has made great strides over the last 10 to 15 years, building on a solid foundation of basic research that has identified which risk factors for violence are most suitable as targets for intervention. Several programs have then been shown to be effective, leading to general optimism that effective prevention and intervention programs are indeed possible.

At the same time, it is worth noting that a number of well-intentioned and popular programs have been found to have deleterious effects by rigorous research.<sup>12</sup> Most notably, several programs that group delinquent or deviant peers together for group intervention have been found to exacerbate the problem.<sup>13</sup> In light of such unanticipated findings, rigorous evaluation research has assumed great importance.

Beyond the need for more rigorous evaluations of promising programs, the field of prevention is currently grappling with two related challenges: 1) identifying the core elements that make programs effective; and 2) determining whether model programs remain effective when taken to full-scale implementation. Each of these challenges involves program fidelity, which is critical to keeping programs effective. Yet, keeping branded programs true to the original design is problematic when implemented in different sites, run by different staff, and with somewhat different populations. Therefore, we need a deeper understanding of which features and elements are key to those programs known to be effective. One promising approach to this problem is through systematic statistical reviews of evaluations *across* programs.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> McCord, J. (2003). Cures that harm: Unanticipated outcomes of crime prevention programs. *Annals of the American Political Social Science*, 587, 16-30.

<sup>13</sup> Dishion, T., McCord, J., & Poulin, F. (1999). When interventions harm: Peer groups and problem behavior. *American Psychologist*, 54 (9), 755-764.

<sup>14</sup> e.g., Lipsey, M.W. & Wilson, D.B. (1998). Effective intervention for serious juvenile offenders: A

### Interventions with High-Risk Youth

Comprehensive or wrap-around interventions have emerged concerning effective interventions with youth already in trouble. Piece-meal approaches have little chance of success with this population because these youth tend to have multiple risk factors across multiple domains (e.g., individual, family, community). Several comprehensive programs of this type have shown strong evidence of success in reducing offending by delinquent youth. Three examples include Multisystemic Therapy, Multidimensional Therapeutic Foster Care, and Functional Family Therapy (Blueprints).<sup>15</sup> The following is a brief description of these programs.

- Multisystemic Therapy (MST) provides community-based clinical treatment to violent and chronic juvenile offenders at high risk of out-of-home placement. This intensive program averages four months in duration, and addresses problems within the entire social network of the adolescent, including individual, family, and environmental (peer, school, neighborhood) factors. Treatment is provided by therapists with low caseloads (four to six families) and may include strategic family therapy, structural family therapy, behavioral parent training, and cognitive-behavioral training.
- Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) is an alternative to residential treatment for adolescents with chronic delinquency and antisocial behavior. This program trains and supervises foster families to provide close supervision, fair and consistent limits and consequences, and a supportive relationship with an adult. The program also limits contact with delinquent peers. NIJ is currently funding part of an evaluation of this program applied to delinquent girls in the Bronx.
- Functional Family Therapy. This three-month program provides 12-30 hours of direct services to participating youth and their families – the intensity depends on the level of difficulty associated with a case. Treatment first addresses maladaptive perceptions, beliefs, and emotions; then targets behavior change; and then helps families apply positive changes to other problem areas or situations.

### School-Based Prevention

One promising point of intervention with high-risk youth is through school, since most children and adolescents spend considerable time in school environments. Schools engage in many violence prevention activities, but most are delivered with too little fidelity and too short duration to be effective.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, well-implemented

synthesis of research. In R. Loeber & D.P. Farrington (eds.) *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. See also the Campbell Collaborative (<http://www.aic.gov.au/campbellc/>), and the What Works Clearinghouse (<http://www.whatworks.ed.gov/>).

<sup>15</sup> These are model programs identified by the Blueprints for Violence Prevention initiative of the University of Colorado, described in Appendix A. See also Hahn, Bikukha, & Mercy (Eds.) (2005). *Interventions to reduce injury and death from violence: Systematic reviews of evidence, recommendations from the task force on community preventative Services*. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 28 (2).

<sup>16</sup> Gottfredson, D.C., & Gottfredson, G.D. (2002). Quality of school-based prevention programs: Results

school-based programs show evidence of effectiveness in systematic statistical reviews that examine many programs together.<sup>17</sup>

Programs that are strictly educational, such as the Law-Related Education curricula, are more likely to have a positive effect when embedded in a more comprehensive school-based program.<sup>18</sup>

Programs that actually change the school environment can be effective in reducing delinquency and drug use. Interventions that address and/or change established norms and expectations for behavior, classroom or instructional management, school and discipline management, or reorganization of grades or classes are particularly effective.<sup>19</sup> For example, the Bullying Prevention Program is a school-based initiative aimed at primary and secondary school children.<sup>20</sup> The program combines an educational component with an effort to change the school climate. It increases awareness of and knowledge about bullying, involves teachers and parents, develops clear rules against bullying behavior, and provides support and protection for bullying victims.

#### Community-Based Prevention

Community risk factors, especially in blighted neighborhoods,<sup>21</sup> are conducive to the development of crime. Conversely, community empowerment and social capital can serve to prevent crime, even amidst relative economic disadvantage.<sup>22</sup> Neighborhoods are more protected against crime if residents trust each other, and believe that their neighbors will intervene to control deviant behavior. Physical and social disorder also serve to increase fear of crime,<sup>23</sup> and indicate a failure of the neighborhood to effectively control deviant behavior.<sup>24</sup>

from a national survey. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 39, 3-35. Gottfredson, G.D., Gottfredson, D.C., Czeh, E. R., Cantor, D., Crosse, S., & Hantman, I. (2000). *National study of delinquency prevention in schools*. Final Report, Grant No. 96-MU-MU-0008. Ellicott City, MD: Gottfredson Associates.

<sup>17</sup> Wilson, S.J., Lipsey, M.W., & Derzon, J.H. (2003). The effects of school-based intervention programs on aggressive behavior: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71(1), 136-149.

<sup>18</sup> Sherman, L.W., Gottfredson, D.C., MacKenzie, D., Eck, J., Reuter, P., and Bushway, S. (1997). *Preventing Crime: What works, What Doesn't, What's Promising: A Report to the United States Congress*. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Washington, DC.

<sup>19</sup> Wilson, D.B., Gottfredson, D.C., and Najaka, S.S. (2001). School-based prevention of problem behaviors: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 17, 247-272.

<sup>20</sup> This is a model program identified by the Blueprints for Violence Prevention initiative of the University of Colorado, described in Appendix A of this document.

<sup>21</sup> Wilson, W.J. (1987). *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Anderson, E. (1999). *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

<sup>22</sup> This has also been referred to as neighborhoods "collective efficacy" to control crime and disorder. See Sampson, R.J., Raudenbush, S.W., & Earls, F. (1998, March). Neighborhood cohesion – does it help reduce violence? *National Institute of Justice Research Preview*, Washington, DC. Sampson, R.J., Raudenbush, S.W., and Earls, F. (1997). Neighborhoods and violent crime: A multilevel study of collective efficacy. *Science*, 277, 918-924.

<sup>23</sup> Taylor, R. B. (2001) *Breaking Away from Broken Windows: Baltimore Neighborhoods and the Nationwide Fight Against Crime, Grime, Fear & Decline*. Westview. Taylor, R. B. (1999) *Crime, Grime, Fear & Decline*. National Institute of Justice.

The mounting evidence that these community factors are associated with crime serves to motivate interventions to increase community capacity and social capital to control crime and violence. To date, however, the evidence is much less clear about what works to increase community capacity and social capital to regulate and control crime and disorder. It is perhaps not surprising that our ability to effectively intervene with high-risk individuals, itself a difficult endeavor, is further developed than our ability to intervene with high-risk neighborhoods, which require efforts of a much larger magnitude.

#### Cost-Benefit Analysis

Effective interventions are not inexpensive. However, a number of these interventions have been found to be less expensive than the criminal justice system costs that would be anticipated in their absence.<sup>25</sup>

One of the few large-scale, comprehensive studies of the cost-benefits of prevention programs has been conducted by the Washington State Institute on Public Policy (WSIPP).<sup>26</sup> This study examined the costs of crime to taxpayers and found that, overall, programs designed for juvenile offenders, such as the ones discussed above, had the largest and most consistent economic returns. Programs targeting younger children and youth not involved in the juvenile justice system had smaller, but positive, returns when considering savings in criminal justice costs. If health and welfare costs were included in the analyses, the costs savings would certainly be greater.

For example, according to the WSIPP analysis, the three model programs mentioned above all have a net benefit, meaning that the costs averted by government more than offset the cost of the program. That is, Multisystemic Therapy costs an estimated \$4,743 per participant. However, the net taxpayer benefit per participant is estimated at \$31,661. Similarly, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care costs an estimated \$2,052 per participant, but generates benefits to the taxpayer of \$21,836. Functional Family Therapy costs an estimated \$2,161 per participant with net benefits to the taxpayer of \$14,149. Of course, not every effective program turns out to generate net benefits over costs.<sup>27</sup>

The preceding estimates do not include victim costs such as property loss, physical injury, and lost wages. If victim costs are included in this calculation, the net benefits rise considerably, to \$131,918 for MST, to \$87,622 for MTFC, and \$59,067 for FFT. Likewise, the estimates do not consider ancillary costs to a community resulting

<sup>24</sup> There is some dispute as to whether disorder plays a causal role in increasing crime (Wilson, J.Q. & Kelling, G.L. (1982). Broken Windows. *Atlantic Monthly*, 249(3):29-38) or is itself a manifestation of the underlying (Sampson et al, ASR).

<sup>25</sup> Greenwood, P.W., Model, K.E., Rydell, C.P., & Chiesa, J. (1996). *Diverting Children From a Life of Crime: Measuring Costs and Benefits*. Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation.

<sup>26</sup> Aos, S., Phipps, P., Barnoski, R., & Lieb, R. (2001). *The Comparative Costs and Benefits of Programs to Reduce Crime: Version 4.0*. Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

<sup>27</sup> Thus, for example, the WSIPP analyses found that although Quantum Opportunities is effective, the expected savings to taxpayers are insufficient to offset program costs.

from crime. Economists have noted that increased crime can depress property values, cause flight from urban locations, increase security costs to businesses and homeowners seeking to protect property and prevent violence.

Another comprehensive cost-benefit effect has been conducted by the British Home Office. This analysis concluded that prevention programs can save money over time. While, direct comparisons to United States programs cannot be made (due to different estimation models and evaluation foundations) the overall conclusion that effective prevention programs can be sound fiscal investments applies here.

In addition, two important caveats are needed regarding cost-benefit studies of crime prevention. First, cost-benefit studies cannot precede rigorous outcome evaluations that are needed in order to get reasonable quantitative estimates of the benefits of programs. Second, the estimated costs of programs may change when programs are implemented in different settings and/or taken to scale. Furthermore, the criminal justice costs averted may vary dramatically by location. The Washington State study, for example, is very explicit in using Washington State data to estimate those costs, but may not be representative of other jurisdictions.

Finally, when focused narrowly on criminal justice costs and benefits, these cost-benefit studies will generally underestimate the societal value of these programs, because effective prevention programs that improve child and adolescent developmental outcomes accrue benefits to society in other domains as well, such as education and employment.<sup>28</sup> Children who grow up to be well balanced emotionally, well educated, and productively employed contribute to their communities, raise healthier families, and pay taxes. Children who grow into a life of crime tend to cost society much more than they ever contribute.

Cost-benefit analyses often tend to undervalue the costs of crime. Tangible costs of crime include criminal justice system expenditures for the arrest, prosecution, and incarceration of offenders who commit new crimes. In addition, crime victims bear costs of property losses, physical injuries, and lost earnings. And communities incur costs from crime-related declines in property values, lost tax revenues when citizens move elsewhere to avoid crime, and expenditures for private security by homeowners and businesses seeking to harden potential targets of crime. Intangible costs, of course, include the pain and suffering of victims, lost opportunities associated with activities not performed due to fear of crime, increased consumer costs resulting from increased business costs, and overall societal inefficiencies arising from increased mistrust of others.

### **Conclusion**

Much has been learned in the last decade about which programs and practices work best and are cost effective. More will be learned in the future through careful, systematic evaluations. By way of summary, let me specifically address the five

<sup>28</sup> See Nagin, D.S. (2001). Measuring the economic benefits of developmental prevention programs. *Crime & Justice*, 28, 347-384.

questions posed by the Chairman in the letter of invitation.

*1. From the perspective of nationwide experience, what programs or other interventions have shown success that is objectively demonstrable?*

In the area of effective policing, comprehensive problem-solving approaches have proven to be successful. These approaches require systematic analyses of the nature of the problem, a focus on locations with a high concentration of crime, and coordination and partnership among criminal justice and community actors around a common understanding of the problem. Because problem-solving approaches involve tailoring the response to the nature of the local problem, they do not lend themselves to an off-the-shelf program intervention.

For this reason, it is relatively harder to obtain clear objective evidence of success of a comprehensive approach that can be generalized to other times or places. Nonetheless, components of successful problem-solving efforts have been shown to be effective. For example, effective components have included programs to disrupt illegal gun markets, address illicit gun use, focus on particular gangs, or focus on particular known offenders. Building on our knowledge to date, DOJ's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) incorporates many of these strategies. Because PSN is being implemented in 94 sites, NIJ expects to develop an even greater understanding of successful components of problem-solving approaches in the near future.

Regarding prevention activities, too, there is mounting evidence that a number of programs are effective. These range from universal school-based programs through the three intensive programs described for high-risk youth: Multisystemic Therapy, Multidimensional Therapeutic Foster Care, and Functional Family Therapy.

*2. What are the costs (in dollars) of successful programs and how many youth can be impacted based on these cost estimates?*

Problem-solving approaches usually involve partnerships with numerous public and private entities. These approaches generally involve many entities using existing resources in a coordinated manner. For this reason, it is often difficult to parse out a precise overall cost for such efforts.

Cost-benefit research suggests that the overall benefits of successful intervention programs offset their anticipated costs. While some of the most effective programs are very intensive, and thus expensive, the estimated cost savings to taxpayers and crime victims down the road can be substantial.

The research relating to cost-benefit analyses often tends to undervalue the costs of crime. Tangible costs of crime include criminal justice system expenditures for the arrest, prosecution and incarceration of offenders who commit new crimes. In addition, crime victims bear the costs of property losses, physical injuries and the lost earnings. Communities incur costs from crime-related declines in property values and

loss of tax revenues when property values decline or citizens move elsewhere to avoid crime, as well as expenditures for private security by homeowners and businesses seeking to harden potential targets of crime. Intangible costs, of course, include the pain and suffering of victims, lost opportunities associated with activities not performed due to fear of crime, increased consumer costs resulting from increased business costs, and overall social inefficiencies arising from increased mistrust of others.

*3. What programs have shown a relative lack of success and should therefore be discarded or modified?*

Research has shown that a number of programs, including some very popular ones, are not effective in reducing offending and other problem behaviors in young people. For example, the DARE program has been subjected to numerous evaluations that have largely determined that it is not effective. However, in response to these findings, the DARE programs are being modified and it is not yet known whether the modified program is effective.

Another example of an ineffective popular program is boot camps.<sup>29</sup> With the possible exception of programs that include intensive rehabilitative elements (which do not fit the traditional military-style boot camp model), boot camps do not have any impact on the recidivism of participants. Further, juvenile boot camps appear to actually increase recidivism and thus increase the long-term costs to society.

Gun buyback programs also seem to be ineffective in reducing violence.<sup>30</sup> They tend to retrieve many obsolete firearms, and sometimes even are used to generate funds for the purchase of new firearms.

In addition to specific programs, certain program elements can be counterproductive. First, group therapy programs that bring delinquent youth together also provide opportunities for these youth to reinforce each others' negative behaviors. This peer reinforcement can actually overwhelm the effects of positive program elements. Second, brief programs that lack a sufficient "dosage" are generally not effective. It takes time for behavioral and attitudinal changes to occur and many programs do not provide adequate time and opportunities for these changes to develop. Third, when dealing with high-risk offenders, programs must be comprehensive. Piece-meal programs do not tend to be sufficient for this group.

*4. How can we apply the research and development data you have compiled to Philadelphia in order to address the increase in youth violence?*

<sup>29</sup> Parent, D.G. (2003). *Correctional Boot Camps: Lessons from a Decade of Research*. National Institute of Justice. Austin, J. 2000. *Multisite Evaluation of Boot Camp Programs: Final Report*. Washington, DC.: George Washington University, Institute on Crime, Justice and Corrections. MacKenzie, D.L., R. Brame, D. McDowall, and C. Souryal. 1995. *Boot Camp Prisons and Recidivism in Eight States*. *Criminology* 33(3): 327-357.

<sup>30</sup> National Research Council (2005). *Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review*. National Academies Press. pp. 95-96.

The research indicates that a comprehensive approach that targets high crime locations and likely offenders has the greatest likelihood of success. This approach should include a geographically focused and cooperative effort among multiple criminal justice organizations and the community. The PSN approach, with its use of action research to identify changing crime patterns and the effectiveness of ongoing efforts, is a model supported by research evidence. Some of the potential interventions that should be considered by jurisdictions include homicide and violence incident reviews, chronic violent offender lists, gun violence case screenings by prosecutors, violent offender notification meetings, and police/probation teams. In addition, prevention programs with proven effectiveness (such as those described in the attached appendix) or promising, newer practices should target at-risk youth in these high crime areas.

*5. Do you have an understanding as to why there has been a recent increase in youth violence even in the cities with previously successful programs?*

There is no definitive evidence on this issue. However, we should note that while youth violence and lethal youth violence in particular demonstrated sharp declines over the last decade, self-report studies of youth behavior have continued to indicate considerable violence. For example, close to one third of high school students report committing a violent act in the last month.<sup>31</sup> Thus the people in our communities – especially poorer, inner-city neighborhoods – remain at fairly high risk despite the promising developments of the last decade.

Second, there remains considerable debate about what has caused the large decrease in crime in general, and lethal youth violence in particular, over the last decade.<sup>32</sup> It is important to note that this crime decline was not anticipated by most observers<sup>33</sup>, nor for that matter are most crime surges.<sup>34</sup> Economic factors are an example of a social force often cited as having an impact on crime rates. Thus, for example, because of falling profit margins in cocaine, many of the large violent cocaine gangs that were responsible for high levels of urban violence no longer operate in the same manner. Some areas have witnessed the downsizing of drug gangs and a reduction in the use of violent enforcers. Gentrification of neighborhoods has led to elimination of some open air drug markets. All of these factors have reduced levels of violent gun crime in some areas. In addition, researchers sometimes point to potential positive effects associated with economic conditions that provide legitimate employment opportunities for youth at risk for involvement in crime and violence.

Another factor likely to have an impact on declining crime rates is the increased

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001). Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, MD. p. 27, summarizing data from the Monitoring the Future Study from 1980-1998.

<sup>32</sup> Blumstein, A. & Wallman, J. (Eds.) (2000). The crime drop in American. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>33</sup> e.g., Fox, J. A. (1996). Trends in Juvenile Violence, A Report to the United States Attorney General on Current and Future Rates of Juvenile Offending. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics. Dellio, J. (1995, Nov. 27). The coming of the super-predators. Weekly Standard, p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> Land, K.C. & McCall, P.L. (2001). Appendix B: The Indeterminacy of Forecasts of Crime Rates and Juvenile Offenses. In National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2001). Juvenile Crime, Juvenile Justice. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

incarceration of offenders, especially those convicted of violent crimes.<sup>35</sup> Yet the vast majority of offenders eventually return to the community – current estimates place the number of offenders re-entering communities as more than half a million per year.<sup>36</sup> These offenders, of course, return in disproportionate numbers to the very at-risk areas from which they were removed. The involvement of re-entering offenders in crime and other undesirable activities, especially in hard-hit inner-city neighborhoods is an important matter for investigation.

The success of crime reduction efforts also can depend on the levels of cooperation and commitment of the various government and community entities involved. Personnel turnover can have a huge impact on the continued viability of a program and the effectiveness of partnerships. Finally, even a program's early successes can jeopardize its long-term effectiveness by reducing perceptions of a problem's urgency and weakening the program's ability to compete for scarce resources.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to address this committee. As I have testified, local, comprehensive problem-solving approaches, involving coordination and partnerships between the criminal justice system and local communities are the key to ensuring that today's young people do not become tomorrow's criminals. I would be pleased to answer any questions.

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<sup>35</sup> Spellman, W. (2000). The limited importance of prison expansion. In Blumstein, A. & Wallman, J. (Eds.) (2000). *The crime drop in American*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 97-129.

<sup>36</sup> See <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/reentry/learn.html>; The Urban Institute, 2002. *Background Paper: The Effect of Incarceration and Reentry on Children, Families, and Communities*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

**Appendix A: The Evidence Base For Effective Prevention Programs**

Blueprints for Violence Prevention. One of the most systematic and most up-to-date reviews of effective violence prevention programs is from the Blueprints for Violence Prevention initiative, by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado, and funded by OJP's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Blueprints applies systematic criteria to identify effective programs, based on rigorous evaluations and generalizability. Criteria include demonstrated effects in at least two sites, and effects sustained for at least a year.

Blueprints identified 11 *model* programs, each shown to reduce violence, delinquency, and/or drug use in multiple evaluations; and 21 *promising* programs found effective in single evaluation. These programs address risk and protective factors for violence at a variety of different levels, including individual, family, school, and environment. Different Blueprint programs target youth of different ages and include prevention programs targeting pregnant women to programs for adolescents already exhibiting violence, and already involved in the justice system.

Other Sources. Good reviews are also found in the National Academies' 2001 volume *Juvenile Crime Juvenile Justice*, and the Surgeon General's 2001 report on Youth Violence. Both summarize the field in general and also particular programs found to be effective. The CDC is also in the midst of an effort at systematic reviews of violence prevention/intervention approaches, as part of the Guide to Community Prevention. Most other systematic reviews reach similar conclusions to the Blueprints project, and often partly rely on the Blueprints project.

### **Blueprint Programs which Reduce Arrest and/or Convictions for High-Risk Youth**

- Multisystemic Therapy (MST) provides community-based clinical treatment to violent and chronic juvenile offenders at high risk of out-of-home placement. This intensive program averages four months in duration, and addresses problems within the entire social network of the adolescent, including the individual, family, and environmental (peer, school, neighborhood) factors. Treatment is provided by therapists with low caseloads (four to six families) and may include strategic family therapy, structural family therapy, behavioral parent training, and cognitive-behavioral training.
- Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) is an alternative to residential treatment for adolescents with chronic delinquency and antisocial behavior. This program trains and supervises foster families to provide close supervision, fair and consistent limits and consequences, and a supportive relationship with an adult. The program also limits contact with delinquent peers. NIJ is currently funding part of an evaluation of this program applied to delinquent girls in the Bronx.
- Functional Family Therapy. This three-month program provides 12-30 hours of direct services to participating youth and their families, the intensity depending on the level of difficulty of the case. Treatment first addresses maladaptive perceptions, beliefs, and emotions; then targets behavior change; and then helps families apply positive changes to other problem areas or situations.
- Nurse-Family Partnership programs send nurses to home of at-risk pregnant women to provide ensure the health of the mother and child. In addition to prenatal care and advice, the program provides general support and parenting instructions for up to two years after the child is born.

### **Blueprint Programs Which Reduce Aggression or Conduct Problems**

- The Bullying Prevention Program is a school-based initiative aimed at primary and secondary school children. The program increases awareness of and knowledge about bullying, involves teachers and parents, develops clear rules against bullying behavior, and provides support and protection for bullying victims.
- The Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies program (PATHS) targets elementary school children. It is a multiyear program (kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade) designed to promote social and emotional competence and decrease risk factors associated with maladjustment.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of America operates a mentoring program serving youth ages 6 to 18, many from disadvantaged homes. Mentors meet with youth at least three times a month for three to five hours, participating in activities that enhance

communication skills, develop relationship skills, and support positive decision-making.

- The Incredible Years Parent, Teacher, and Child Training Series provides a comprehensive set of curricula to promote social competence and prevent, reduce, and treat conduct problems in young children. The program targets children ages two to eight who exhibit or are at risk for conduct problems.

#### **Blueprint Programs Which Reduce Substance Abuse Problems**

- The Midwestern Prevention Program is a three- to five-year comprehensive community-based prevention program that targets “gateway” drug use of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana. The program involves schools, parents and community organizations, uses mass media to communicate messages regarding the dangers of drug use, and seeks changes in health policies and community practices to reduce youth access to targeted substances.
- Life Skills Training focuses on preventing or reducing drug use by providing social resistance skills training to middle school students. The three-year program includes a 15-lesson curriculum the first year followed by booster sessions the following two years.
- Project Towards No Drug Abuse targets high school students at risk for drug abuse. The program consists of 12 classroom-based lessons provided over a period of four to five weeks.

**FINAL DRAFT**

**Testimony Before the Judiciary Committee  
Of the United States Senate**

**Prevention of Youth and Gang Violence**

**June 13, 2005**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. I am Sylvester M. Johnson, Police Commissioner for the City of Philadelphia. I am honored to be here today to testify about Philadelphia's efforts to address youth violence.

I thank the Committee for traveling to Philadelphia for this important hearing. I hope that the testimony you hear today will provide the Committee valuable insights into how youth and gang violence can be reduced in cities across the country.

Violent crime is an assault on our communities. Violent crime committed by juveniles is especially disturbing – watching our children gunned down in the streets, bringing knives and guns to school, stealing, robbing, drug dealing can leave a sense of hopelessness for the future of our communities.

There are many factors that lead to juvenile crime and violence – it is fueled by poverty, drug-dealing, broken families, and a popular culture that glamorizes narcotics and gunplay. We must, therefore, effectively and efficiently use our limited resources to continue successful initiatives, and develop new programs, to reverse this trend. The city as a whole is deeply invested in this problem, not only law enforcement and the courts, but community organizations, faith-based groups, health care providers, everyone with an interest in keeping our children and our streets safe.

Youth homicides in Philadelphia for 2005 have seen a drastic increase due in part to gun violence. From January 1, 2005 through May 31, 2005, there were a total of 63 homicides for youth 24 years old and under. For that same period in 2004, there were a total of 41 homicides for youth 24 years old and under. From January 1, 2005 to June 7, 2005, the City of Philadelphia has had a total of 340 shooting victims of youth 24 years old and younger.

The Philadelphia Police Department considers youth violence a serious threat to the future and quality of life of our young people. Philosophically, we believe that arrests alone will not solve the problem of youth violence.

As I have said repeatedly, we cannot arrest our way out of this problem. Only a holistic approach will decrease the incidences of youth violence in this City and around the Country. The Police Department has in the past and will continue to partner with other city agencies, religious and community groups and organizations, State and Federal law enforcement agencies, and business and private organizations dedicated to working with our youth. The goal of these partnerships and collaborations is to identify at risk youth and intervene in the most effective and efficient way with a goal of decreasing youth violence.

As a police department, we handle youth violence in much the same way that we handle adult violence – intervene immediately and work diligently to protect against retaliation and ongoing disputes. We believe strongly that the key to success in preventing future violence is our ability to analyze incidents, gather intelligence, and make the necessary connections. A strong police presence on our streets and in our communities has proven successful as a deterrent to crime and as a strong role model to our youth. In the past year, we

have developed two new strategies that we expect will make a significant difference on youth violence.

### **Youth Violence Intelligence Unit**

This newly formed unit is part of our Criminal Intelligence unit and is made up of police personnel, school police personnel, juvenile probation, Town Watch and other community and religious organizations. They are a repository for rumors, observations, and concerns by teachers, students and police officers, parents and neighborhood businesses. Intelligence gathered is quickly analyzed and triage is delivered as needed. This unit has prevented several neighborhood outbreaks by intervening and mediating disagreements before they resulted in violence.

### **Gun Violence Meetings**

Each week, an analysis /intelligence meeting is hosted by the Police Department to review every shooting that occurred in the City from the previous week. Every State, Federal, and local law enforcement entity attends (FBI, ATF, HIDTA, US Attorney's Office, DA's Office, juvenile

and adult probation). Not only are deployment decisions made as a result of these meetings, but also valuable information is shared in an informal, timely manner. These meetings lead to the development of policing strategies in which some part includes the need for community interaction and support. As we identify “hot spot” locations and assign a specific police response, we reach out to the community to urge their participation in community meetings and initiatives. Without community support, most police strategies will not be successful.

There is no doubt that the Police Department, left only to their own devices, cannot solve all of the problems associated with youth violence. It is imperative that the community-policing concept be reinforced. That proven, successful initiatives such as the Youth Violence Reduction Project (YVRP) be continued, and hopefully, expanded.

#### **Youth Violence Reduction Project (YVRP)**

The Youth Violence Reduction Project is a multi-agency effort aimed at reducing youth homicides by focusing on youth ages 7 to 24 who are most at risk to kill or be killed.

•YVRP Operates in 3 Police Districts:

–24th District: Began in June 1999

–25th District: Began in two phases: (1) Southern sectors in January 2000  
and (2) Full District by October 2000

–12Th District: Began in August 2002

Since 1999, YVRP has had 1440 youth partners. The majority of them (96%) are male, and 89% are African-American or Hispanic. The median age is 17. Of these youth partners, 13 have died (10 by homicide, 2 by suicide, and 1 by auto accident), and 7 have been arrested for murder.

YVRP currently costs approximately \$3,594,000, including about \$929,000 in city funds and in-kind services. We estimate that the cost of expansion to an additional Police District amounts to about \$1,546,000, to pay for more intensive police, probation, and parole supervision, street workers to deliver positive supports, additional prosecutorial and court expenses, data monitoring, job training, and other costs. Through some economies of scale, we believe that YVRP could be expanded to three high-risk districts for a total additional cost of less than \$4,574,000 annually.

We are grateful for the federal, state, local, and private support that has allowed us to establish and sustain this initiative at its current level. We hope that the success demonstrated from these investments will justify additional support.

### **Conclusion**

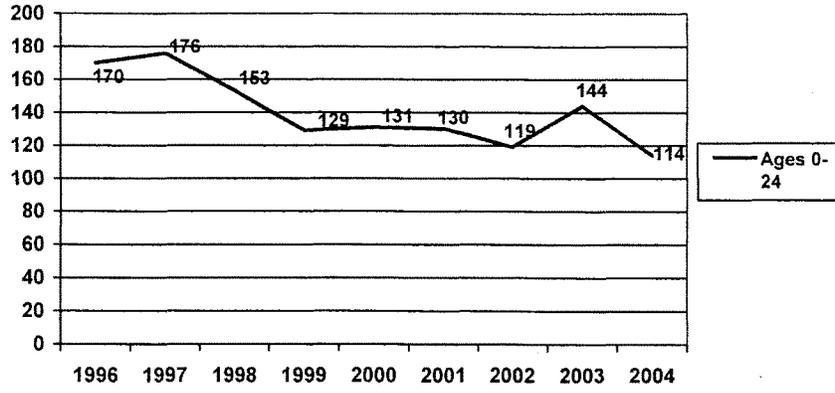
Youth violence in America's cities remains a seemingly persistent problem, yet there has been considerable research in recent years on how to tackle it. A 2001 Surgeon General's Report on youth violence noted that "the key to preventing a great deal of violence is understanding where and when it occurs, determining what causes it, and scientifically documenting which of many strategies for prevention and intervention are truly effective.

If given a choice, most law enforcement officials would choose successful prevention (or early intervention) programs over arrests and prosecutions. To that end, the Philadelphia Police Department works to foster programs that emphasize prevention; DARE, GREAT, Explorers, Youth Aid Panel, Heads-Up and the Police Athletic League (PAL). We are closely monitoring

the results of all of our initiatives, continually emphasizing accountability for performance and adjusting our approach as the need demands. And we are keeping our eye on our ultimate goal: saving lives.

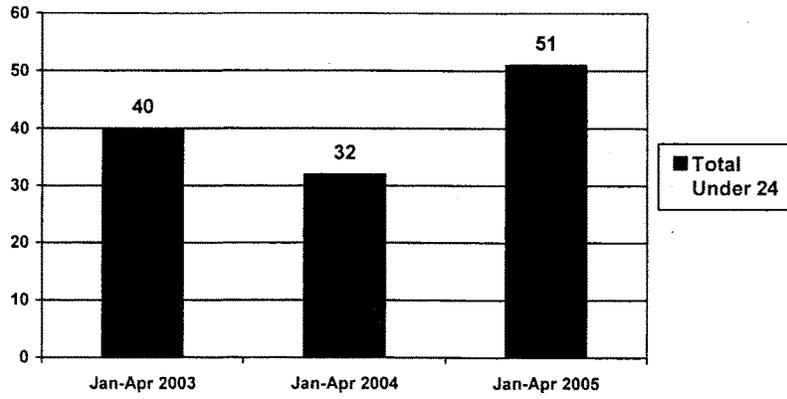
Thank you for your time today. I am happy to answer any of your questions.

**Number of Homicide Victims Aged 24 and Younger, 1996-2004**



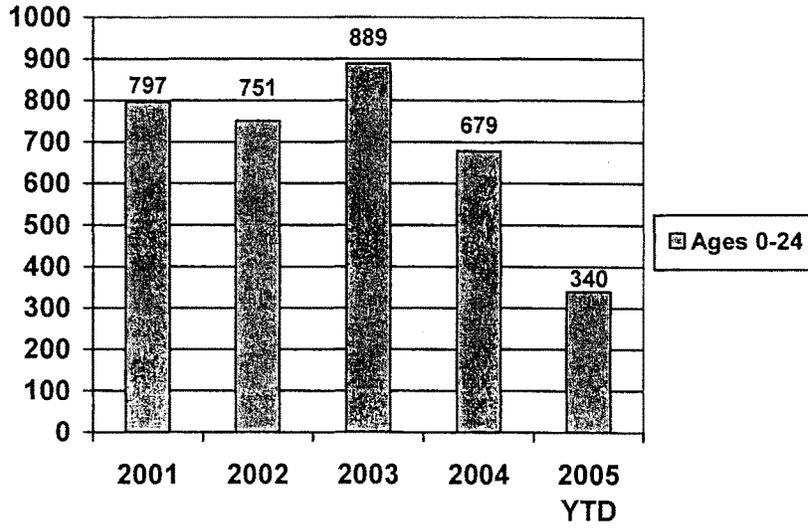
Source: Philadelphia Police Department

**Number of Homicides in Philadelphia of Juveniles 24 Years of Age and Younger, January to April, 2003-2005**



Source: Philadelphia Police Department

Number of Gunshot Wound Victims Aged 24 and Younger, 2001-2005



## TESTIMONY

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ALLOWING ME TO TESTIFY ON THIS VITAL ISSUE . MY NAME IS JIM KANE, CURRENTLY, I AM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DELAWARE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COUNCIL AND I HAVE HELD THIS POSITION FOR THE LAST 10 YEARS. I AM ALSO THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE ASSOCIATION AND I HAVE OVER 31 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ARENA.

AT THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COUNCIL, WE TEND TO LOOK AT THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AS A CONTINUUM OF EVENTS INVOLVING CLIENTS AS THEY FLOW THROUGH THE SYSTEM. THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COUNCIL BEGAN LOOKING AT THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A CONVICTED CRIMINAL, APPROXIMATELY 20 YEARS AGO. WE HAVE REVIEWED SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEMOGRAPHICS OF VIOLENT CRIMINALS, WE HAVE LOOKED AT THESE SAME CRIMINALS AS JUVENILE DELINQUENTS, AND LOOKED AT THE SAME DELINQUENTS AS ABUSED CHILDREN, PRIOR TO THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM. OVER THE YEARS WE HAVE BECOME RATHER ADROIT, AT ARRESTING, PROSECUTING AND CONVICTING SERIOUS JUVENILE OFFENDERS. ONE OF THE FEW THINGS THAT WE KNOW FOR CERTAIN, IS THAT A TWO TIME VIOLENT FELON HAS AN EXCELLENT CHANCE (APPROXIMATELY 80 PERCENT CHANCE) OF BEING CONVICTED OF ANOTHER VIOLENT FELONY (WE HAVE CONCENTRATED MOST OF OUR EFFORTS IN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AREA ON SERIOUS

PREDATORS WHO WE KNOW ARE DIFFICULT, IF NOT POSSIBLE, TO REHABILITATE. WE HAVE CONCENTRATED ON THESE INDIVIDUALS WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE THROUGH CRIME BILL MONEY). WE HAVE USUALLY BEEN ABLE TO REDUCE CRIME IN WHATEVER GEOGRAPHIC AREA, THAT, WE MAXIMIZE OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS. WE HAVE BEEN LESS SUCCESSFUL IN THE AREA OF REHABILITATION.

IN THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNERS IN DELAWARE HAVE CONDUCTED SOME LANDMARK RESEARCH ON THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF SERIOUS VIOLENT ADULT/JUVENILE OFFENDERS, AND SOCIAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS THAT PRODUCE THESE OFFENDERS. OBVIOUS TO THE MOST CASUAL OBSERVER, BUT, IT STILL IS VITAL TO CONTINUE TO INDICATE THAT SINGLE FEMALE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLDS, POVERTY, HIGH SCHOOL DROP OUTS, EXTENSIVE DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE, TERRIBLE HOUSING, AND THE GENERAL CONDITION OF SOCIO ECONOMIC HOPELESSNESS TEND TO PRODUCE OUR WORST VIOLENT CRIMINALS. IN SELECTED GRIDS WITHIN THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, AND DELAWARE AS A WHOLE, WE CAN PROBABLY PREDICT, THAT, THESE NEIGHBORHOODS WILL PRODUCE AN "X" AMOUNT OF INMATES FOR OUR CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES. UNTIL WE CAN DEVELOP SOME TYPE OF FORMULA THAT WILL PROVIDE HOPE FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, IN A COMPREHENSIVE FASHI0N, WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRODUCE CRIMINALS THAT WILL EMPLOY LARGE

NUMBERS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, DEFENSE ATTORNEYS, PROSECUTORS, COURT PERSONNEL AND CORRECTIONAL PERSONNEL. WE ARE ALREADY SUFFERING, IN DELAWARE, FROM THE HUGE EXPANSION OF OUR CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES. WE CANNOT HIRE ENOUGH GUARDS TO STAFF THE PRISONS AND THE OVERWHELMING COST TO HOUSE OUR INMATES IS ASTRONOMICAL.

PROGRAMS THAT WE TEND TO KNOW THAT DO NOT WORK ARE: ONE-SHOT EVENTS, OR EVENTS THAT DO NOT IMPACT A CHILD'S LIFE IN A LONG TERM FASHION. OVER THE YEARS, WE HAVE PAID FOR SPEAKERS WHO HAVE (IN SPITE OF THEIR ENVIRONMENT, MADE IT IN THE WORLD) TO CONDUCT ONE DAY SEMINARS TO GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE, WE HAVE FUNDED LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOLS ON THE EVILS OF DRUGS AND CRIME, AND WE HAVE FUNDED WELL INTENTIONED PROGRAMS THAT WORK WITH ONE ASPECT OF A CHILD'S LIFE. EXAMPLES COULD BE CHILD ABUSE; TUTORING; CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. THE SUCCESS, THAT, WE HAVE HAD IN WORKING WITH THE YOUTH HAS BEEN IN THE AREA OF PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES TO THAT YOUTH. WHERE WE HAVE FUNDED PROGRAMS THAT INVOLVED TUTORING, CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, VALUE DEVELOPMENT, RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND BASICALLY SUPPLY A FAMILY ATMOSPHERE OUTSIDE OF THE HOME, HAVE HAD SOME SUCCESS IN INCREASING THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF OUR YOUTH. THESE

PROGRAMS HAVE INCLUDED: BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS, POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUES, AND OTHER COMMUNITY CENTERS THAT PROVIDE THIS COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENT. STILL, THESE PROGRAMS WERE SCATTERED IN NATURE. WE PROVIDED THESE PROGRAMS IN AT-RISK NEIGHBORHOODS TO AT-RISK CHILDREN, BUT, WE STILL DID NOT CAPTURE THE VERY, VERY HIGH RISK INDIVIDUAL WHO MAY BECOME VIOLENT PERSONS. OUR STUDIES HAVE INDICATED, THAT, 80 PERCENT OF THE SHOOTER/SHOOTEES IN THE CITY OF WILMINGTON ARE AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES BETWEEN THE AGES OF 14-24. IF YOU LOOK AT THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND CRIMINALS AS A PYRAMID, IN THE TOP OF THAT PYRAMID ARE TWO TIME VIOLENT FELONS. THE POOL OF INDIVIDUALS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PYRAMID TEND TO BE POOR AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE CHILDREN WHO DO NOT HAVE THE MEANS TO MAKE IT IN SOCIETY.

RECENTLY, WE DEVELOPED A VALUE BASED EDUCATION PROGRAM THAT WOULD PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUTH IN THE CITY OF WILMINGTON. AFTER EXTENSIVE BIDDING, WE CONTRACTED TO A NATIVITY SCHOOL THAT HAS AGREED TO TAKE 25 AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE CHILDREN FROM POOR NEIGHBORHOODS, GRADES 4 AND 5. THE PROGRAM OPERATES FROM 7 A.M. UNTIL 8 P.M. IN THE EVENING, AND CHILDREN ARE WITH SCHOOL PERSONNEL ALL DAY ON SATURDAYS. THEY LEAVE FOR A MONTH IN THE SUMMER TO DIFFERENT COLLEGES TO LIVE IN A DORM.

THIS PROGRAM HAS WORKED IN OTHER AREAS OF THE NORTHEAST AND HAS PROVIDED DISADVANTAGED AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES WITH AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SUCCESS. THEY JUST SENT ME THEIR FIRST NEWSLETTER IN LATIN.

IF I KNEW THE ANSWER ON HOW TO REDUCE THE CRIME PROBLEM, I WOULD PROBABLY BE A MILLION DOLLAR CONSULTANT. I DO KNOW THAT THE ONLY WAY TO CHANGE THE BEHAVIOR OF YOUNG PEOPLE BEFORE THEY BECOME VIOLENT IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IS TO PROVIDE SOME FORM OF COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENT SIMILAR TO THAT, THAT A HIGH FUNCTIONING FAMILY COULD AFFORD.

ON A RELATED SUBJECT, FEDERAL AID TO THE STATES, IN THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, HAVE REDUCED CRIME DOLLARS, AND WILL CERTAINLY, IN THE FUTURE, REDUCE THE ABILITY OF STATES TO PROVIDE QUALITY PREVENTION PROGRAMS AND TO PROVIDE EFFICIENT ARREST, SPEEDY PROCESSING, AND REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS. WHILE I WAS PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE ASSOCIATION, WE CONDUCTED A POLL OF ALL OF THE STATES IN REGARD TO CUTS ASSOCIATED WITH REDUCTION OF CRIME DOLLARS. THE STATES INDICATED TO US, THAT, APPROXIMATELY 12,000 JOBS WOULD BE LOST ACROSS THE BOARD IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ARENA. THESE JOBS INCLUDE PREVENTION ORIENTED ACTIVITIES, LAW ENFORCEMENT, PROSECUTORS, DEFENSE, COURT

PERSONNEL, CORRECTIONAL EMPLOYEES, AND DRUG TREATMENT PROVIDERS.

IN THE PAST, THE CRIME BILL PROVIDED THE STATES WITH A BALANCED FUNDING APPROACH TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE, SO THAT WE COULD CREATE INNOVATIONS FOR THE DIFFERENT COMPONENTS OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM. I THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND I WOULD BE HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY HAVE.

SUBMITTED BY JIM KANE

**Statement of Senator Patrick Leahy**  
**Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**Field Hearing on “Prevention of Youth and Gang Violence”**  
**June 13, 2005**

I applaud Chairman Specter for holding this hearing to examine how we can prevent youth and gang violence. I know that this is an issue of great importance to his constituents here in Philadelphia and around the State of Pennsylvania, as well as to people all across America who want their children and their communities to be safe. I look forward to reviewing the testimony of today’s witnesses as we consider legislative proposals and appropriations matters during this Congress.

I recently had the pleasure of cosponsoring a briefing on preventing youth violence with Senators Specter, DeWine and Kohl. The speakers at that briefing included young people who had received help from Federally-funded programs, law enforcement officials, and experts in child psychology. They talked about approaches that were working to reduce violence in Pennsylvania, Alabama, and in the District of Columbia. Their testimony demonstrated why we cannot simply view youth violence as a problem that can be addressed after the fact through punishment. Although appropriate punishment must be used to protect public safety, we must also look at what works to prevent at-risk youth from resorting to violence in the first place.

As we consider what should be done to address youth violence, there are a few points we should keep in mind. First, there are a number of Federal programs that seek to fund programs with a proven effectiveness in preventing juvenile crime. Unfortunately, President Bush has proposed cutting funding for these programs, part of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP). Congress should reject the proposed cuts and instead strengthen these programs.

Second, we should ensure that state and local officials continue to bear the primary responsibility for punishing juvenile offenders. Congress should provide them with the assistance they need without usurping their authority through legislation such as H.R. 1279, the gang bill recently passed by the House of Representatives that would effectively Federalize any crime committed by a gang member and drastically expand the Federal government’s prosecution of juveniles as adults.

Finally, we should take the time to listen to experts in juvenile justice – prosecutors, defense lawyers, psychologists, nonprofit organizations, and others – before revising our laws or deciding what programs are worth funding. A great deal of research has been done and is being done in this area, and we in Congress should take advantage of it.

## RE: SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE HEARING ON JUVENILE VIOLENCE

The Pittsburgh Police Bureau's philosophy of policing incidents of youth violence involves a two-prong approach. First, we try to be proactive in preventing such incidents from occurring and second, we aggressively investigate and prosecute incidents when they do occur.

Our pro-active approach includes a close working relationship with the Pittsburgh Public Schools and their School Police, Allegheny County Juvenile Court, the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office and the ATF Violent Crime Impact Team. When we see a spike in incidents or get reliable information of possible violence in a specific area of the city we detail our Narcotics Impact Squads to the area and our Uniformed Ten Car Officers. We've found this to be very effective in squashing violent acts. After the Impact Squads and Ten Cars leave the area Zone Officers are responsible for the maintenance. Several areas of the city are being targeted by the ATF Violent Crime Impact Team with ATF agents and city officers working together to get guns and violent offenders off the streets. Both adults and juveniles are targeted. This has also been very effective.

We are also in the process of preparing a detailed description of gang activity in the city. Although gang activity has not reached the magnitude we see in other major cities we are seeing a reemergence of gangs. We are working closely with Federal and State Law Enforcement Agencies and Allegheny County Juvenile Probation in identifying gangs, members and associates within the city of Pittsburgh. Once we get a picture of the gang activity we are planning to work with the United States Attorneys Office in prosecuting any gang that fits the criteria for prosecution under the gang statute.

With recent reductions in our police force (the loss of 100 positions) we were forced to discontinue the Community Oriented Police Program. This program included eighty six Community Oriented Police Officers working out of each of the five Police Zones. We currently have four Community Problem Solving Officers assigned to each Zone. Zone Commanders use these officers to target specific problems including acts of violence around schools and illegal drug activity. We continue to work closely with community groups and organizations throughout the city. Zone Commanders meet monthly with community leaders at their Public Safety Zone Council Meetings. The Crime Prevention/Crime Analyst Officer also works closely with community based organizations and Zone Officers attend community meetings held in their patrol areas.

As I've mentioned we've been working closely with Allegheny County Juvenile Probation. Probation Officers participate in ride alongs with Zone Officers and our Officers and Intelligence Squad Detectives assist the Juvenile Probation Warrant Squad when they conduct roundups of juveniles with outstanding arrest warrants. This relationship has been very beneficial to both agencies.

We've found that these proactive approaches have been very effective and they have enhanced our ability to prevent and reduce the spread of juvenile violence as well as

increase our ability to arrest and convict violent offenders. We work closely with Allegheny County District Attorney's Office in the preparation and prosecution of cases. Our close working relationship with Allegheny County Juvenile Probation enables us to get repeat offenders off the street as soon as possible.

Our major concern today is with prevalence of firearms and the increasing number of juveniles carrying and using firearms. In the year 2000 our officers made 269 VUFA Arrests, that increased to 364 in 2001, 401 in 2002, 472 in 2003 and to an all time high of 616 in 2004. For the first five months of 2005 we have 59 VUFA arrests which is in line with last years figures. In the year 2004 we had 47 individuals in the age group of 0-16 years arrested for VUFA with the age group 17-24 years accounting for 363 arrests. The figures for these age groups for the first five months of this year are 12 and 143 respectfully. We need to do more to keep these violent offenders off the streets. Strict enforcement of all firearm statutes should include juveniles as well as adults.

In closing I would like to thank Senator Arlen Specter and Committee for the opportunity to share some of our concerns with Juvenile violence. If you need any additional information I will be happy to see that you get it.

Assistant Chief Regina McDonald  
Pittsburgh Bureau of Police



# Department of Justice

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STATEMENT

OF

PATRICK L. MEEHAM  
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
UNITED STATES SENATE

CONCERNING

KIDS KILLING KIDS: ESCALATING YOUTH VIOLENCE

PRESENTED ON

JUNE 13, 2005

**STATEMENT OF  
PATRICK L. MEEHAN  
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**CONCERNING  
YOUTH VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGIES**

**PRESENTED ON  
JUNE 13, 2005**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, good morning. I am Patrick L. Meehan, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today about youth violence and about our office's efforts to combat juvenile violence in the nine-county area comprising the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Our office is keenly aware of the problem of juvenile violence. We understand the urgency of stopping both violence committed by youth and violence committed against youth.

According to statistics compiled by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, across Pennsylvania we are continuing to see a large number of violent incidents reported by school officials. In Philadelphia, the number of incidents reported to police by schools has climbed from approximately 2,100 incidents in 2000-2001 to approximately 3,100 incidents for the 2002-2003 school year. During that same period, the number of incidents involving a weapon at school has grown from 859 to 932 in Philadelphia. Statewide, we continue to see about 41

incidents a year involving firearms in schools. In Philadelphia, the number of reported incidents involving firearms in schools has dropped from 16 in the 2000-2001 school years to 10 in the 2002-2003 school year.

What should not be lost in these statistics is the harsh impact that firearms violence has on families and communities. The death of 10 year-old Faheem Thomas-Childs on the playground in his elementary school in North Philadelphia brought that reality home to many in our region. On February 14, 2002, at approximately 9 a.m., while children were just beginning their day at Pierce Elementary School, two rival gangs started shooting at each other, firing more than 60 rounds. One bullet found an unintended target – the face of Faheem Thomas-Childs who was standing on the school playground. Faheem's tragic death pierced all our hearts.

In addition to these violent acts at or near our schools, we continue to see our young citizens, including a substantial number of children, victimized by firearms violence. In 2003, there were 28 people 17 years old and under murdered in Philadelphia. Of this number, 15 were killed by firearms.

Everyone here today wants to stop these tragic deaths. I'm here to tell you about our office's efforts in combating violent crime with the hope that our experience may help in combating violence among youth.

As the Committee knows, prosecution of juvenile offenders is done almost entirely by local prosecutors; federal prosecutors, constrained by federal jurisdictional limits, are focused almost exclusively on adult offenders. This is not to say that federal prosecution efforts are divorced from the problem of violence committed by youth or violence committed against youth.

Our office is engaged in a robust effort to attack firearms violence and, to the extent this coincides with youth crime, we are involved.

Let me begin by explaining our federal firearms program and then more specifically address our efforts to combat youth violence.

#### **PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS**

The USAO has maintained a substantial commitment to reducing firearms violence throughout the nine-county Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Our district includes Philadelphia, Delaware, Montgomery, Bucks, Lehigh, Northampton, Berks, Chester and Lancaster counties. The Project Safe Neighborhoods Program is the chief vehicle we use to combat firearms violence. In 2001, the President and the Attorney General announced Project Safe Neighborhoods, a nationwide commitment to reduce gun crime in the United States through intensive collaboration with federal, state, and local agencies, along with community organizations. At its core, PSN recognizes that violent criminal organizations are frequently the most disruptive force in many neighborhoods, and that responses to these criminal organizations among various law enforcement agencies – both federal and local – need to be coordinated. By designing a strategic plan that focuses on the unique problems of each community, the PSN strategy utilizes local police departments, federal agents, and federal and local prosecutors to do what each does best.

In the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, we use the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative to coordinate diverse law enforcement resources in the district to combat violent crime to achieve the goals of 1) dismantling violent organizations, 2) stopping illegal gun traffickers, and 3) enforcing the law against prohibited persons possessing firearms. We also use it to reach out to

the community to ensure that every person in the district who is at risk for illegally using a firearm or being a victim of firearms violence understands the extraordinary perils and consequences from the illegal possession and use of firearms. In connection with this goal, Assistant United States Attorneys go to all the prisons and juvenile detention facilities in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania to educate offenders about PSN and the tough federal sentences that are imposed on violent offenders. "Put Down the Guns," a video program that powerfully depicts the cost of firearms violence on offenders, victims, families and communities is shown to all audiences.

Let me talk briefly about the components of the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative which our office has coordinated to combat firearms violence in the district. As you will hear, PSN's basic premise, intensive collaboration among federal, state, and local agencies, along with community organizations, is at the heart of each of these components.

1. **Project Sentry**

One component of PSN is designed to meet the issue of youth violence head on. Project Sentry is the safe schools segment of Project Safe Neighborhoods. The mission is straightforward: bring together federal, state, and local law enforcement to prosecute and supervise juveniles who violate federal and state firearms laws; to prosecute adults who illegally provide firearms to juveniles; and to promote safety through community outreach efforts.

- In prosecuting and supervising juveniles who violate state and federal firearms laws, five counties in our district have implemented or expanded their juvenile supervision programs under Project Sentry. Philadelphia and Delaware Counties have received federal funding under the program. Philadelphia used the money to expand its existing juvenile intensive supervision

program to other areas of the city. Delaware County used the money to establish an intensive juvenile supervision called Operation Porch Light. Under this program, a juvenile probation officer, Chester City police officer and Delaware county prosecutor work together to provide juvenile offenders with the intense supervision designed to prevent the offenders from slipping back into criminal behavior.

The USAO has been working closely with the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office to address violence among youth. We have actively participated, and through Project Safe Neighborhoods, contributed \$700,000 to the Youth Violence Reduction Program (YVRP). We have also provided assistance when needed, including instituting a lecture series called "Don't fall down in the hood," about the consequences of firearms possession.

Lehigh, Berks and Lancaster Counties have established similar intensive juvenile supervision programs.

- Project Sentry's investigations and prosecutions focus on adults who furnish firearms to juveniles. Each time a gun turns up in a school or otherwise in the hands of a juvenile, or is used to victimize a juvenile, ATF agents trace the firearm from the original purchaser forward into the hands of the juvenile or person who used the firearm against the juvenile. Where the trace reveals that an adult illegally transferred the firearm to a juvenile, the adult is prosecuted in federal court. To date, the USAO has prosecuted four adults for illegally transferring firearms to juveniles.

- Project Sentry's community outreach efforts target educating middle and high school students in our district as well as teenagers in juvenile detention centers or in court-ordered probation programs on the dangers of illegally possessing or using firearms. The video "Put

Down the Guns,” which warns of the massive federal penalties that can be imposed for illegal use and possession of firearms as well as the reality of firearms injuries, is at the core of the outreach. AUSAs in our office are committed to going to schools and delivering the message. Partnering with corrections and school officials, we have received positive feedback from the presentations. Anecdotally, we have received information that many young people have chosen not to carry firearms to avoid prison. However, more needs to be done, including presenting youth with social and “refusal” skills allowing them to “opt out” of dangerous situations and making parents aware of the need for age-appropriate rules, parental monitoring, and the potential consequences to them of the child’s behavior. Also important is delivery of consistent messages by all sectors of the community, including not only law enforcement and schools but also grass-roots organizations – both faith based and secular – , health care providers, and the local media.

- The United States Attorney's Office has participated in two re-entry programs for juveniles who have been involved in the criminal justice system. The first program is known as “Don't Fall Down in the Hood,” which is a probationary program for juveniles who have violated state laws. The juveniles are required to attend numerous sessions that teach them about their obligation to be good citizens, as well as informing them about the dangers of firearms violence. The second program is known as “RETI-WRAP,” which also is a re-entry program for juveniles who have been involved in the criminal justice system prior to their re-entry into the Philadelphia school system. The United States Attorney's Office participates in these programs by providing information about Project Safe Neighborhoods, the physical dangers of firearms violence and the consequences that flow from violating gun laws when they are prosecuted by federal authorities.

2. **ATF's Gun Trafficking Initiative**

Firearms trafficking, the illegal diversion of firearms out of lawful commerce and into the hands of prohibited persons (such as convicted felons, drug dealers, and juvenile gang members) is often the method by which gangs arm themselves. By using straw purchasers (those who buy guns purportedly for themselves but actually for other, often prohibited, persons), gang members acquire firearms from federaly licensed dealers. Under this initiative, ATF targets those people who are prohibited from obtaining firearms and people who operate as straw purchasers. The ATF Firearms Trafficking initiative has targeted and convicted more than 160 people who are either prohibited persons who tried to obtain firearms illegally (for example, convicted felons) or straw purchasers.

The ATF Firearms Trafficking initiative also is used in support of Project Sentry in that ATF investigates adults who furnish firearms to juveniles. Each time a gun turns up in a school or otherwise in the hands of a juvenile, or is used to victimize a juvenile, ATF agents trace the firearm from the original purchaser to the hands of the juvenile or the person who used the firearm against the juvenile. Where the trace reveals that an adult illegally transferred the firearm to a juvenile, the adult is prosecuted in federal court. Since 2002, we have successfully prosecuted four defendants for illegally providing firearms to juveniles.

3. **County PSN Task Forces**

One component of the PSN initiative is the creation of separate county PSN Task Forces in each of the nine counties that make up our district. Federal, state and local law enforcement agencies contribute law enforcement personnel to each task force. Our office contributes at least one AUSA to each county task force and the county district attorney contributes at least one --

and sometimes as many as four – county prosecutors to their respective task force. The county prosecutors are cross-designated as Special Assistant United States Attorneys and, after training, are ready to prosecute criminal cases in federal court. Our AUSAs and the cross-designated county prosecutors work hand-in-hand with the law enforcement team to target the most violent individuals, groups and gangs operating in the county. The locals know the players; we have the investigative tools and expertise. Working together, the County Task Forces prosecute the most violent offenders in federal court where the firearm penalties are severe: violent, gun-wielding drug dealers, robbers, and armed career criminals face, tough mandatory prison sentences.

We have seen at least three main benefits to using the County PSN Task force approach to target the most violent individuals and groups in the district: first, the PSN initiative has resulted in enhanced and unprecedented cooperation among federal, state and local law enforcement authorities; second, the coordinated approach has resulted in the prosecution of over 1,000 violent, gun-wielding offenders in the four years since the initiative was launched in 2001; and third, as a result of these prosecutions and the tough federal penalties, many of these offenders have provided law enforcement officials with valuable information that law enforcement then leveraged to solve other crimes. The potency of our coordinated efforts against violent crime is most evident in homicide prosecutions in our district: federal and local law enforcement has solved more than 70 open homicide cases based on information obtained from defendants facing prosecution pursuant to the PSN initiative.

As part of our coordinated approach with the County PSN Tasks Forces, we have initiated the State Alternative to Federal Prosecution program or SAP program in each of the counties in the district. The aim of the SAP program in each county is: (1) to try to change the local

sentencing culture where gun cases routinely result in probationary sentences or short prison sentences; (2) to secure a substantial sentence in the state court for offenders who warrant a tougher sentence but who are not so dangerous as to warrant federal prosecution; and (3) to preserve federal resources. Under this program, county and federal prosecutors identify repeat offenders who have firearms cases pending in local courts. County prosecutors then notify the offenders that federal prosecutors will “adopt” the local firearms charges into the federal system – where the sentences are tougher – unless the defendant pleads guilty in state court to a higher sentence than state guidelines allow for but lower than the federal guidelines. Dwayne Stutts robbed taxi cab drivers at gunpoint in Philadelphia. He accepted a 20 to 40 year sentence under the SAP program rather than face a life sentence in federal court. If a defendant rejects the SAP offer, the U.S. Attorney’s Office will adopt the state case and prosecute the defendant in federal court for federal firearms offenses. Allen Gaddy was a convicted felon selling crack cocaine on a North Philadelphia street corner. When police caught him selling crack, they also caught him with handgun. Gaddy was offered by the district attorney a negotiated sentence of 3 to 6 years imprisonment. But Gaddy rejected the offer and a prosecutor in our office accepted his case. Gaddy was indicted, convicted by a federal jury and was sentenced to almost 15 years in jail, more than double the time offered under the SAP program.

I am pleased to report that statistics establish that our county PSN Task Force approach has had considerable impact. In Berks, Lancaster, and Chester counties violent firearms crime has substantially declined. In Berks County, since 2002, homicides are down 34%, homicides by firearm are down 48%, robberies are down 22%, robberies by firearm are down 9%, aggravated assaults by firearm are down 25% and the total number of firearms cases is down 33% since

2003. In Lancaster County, the statistics are equally impressive: homicides by firearm are down 50%, assaults with firearms are down 54%, and robberies with firearms are down 59%. Chester County has seen a 40% decrease in the number of homicides and a 33% decrease in homicides by firearm. Robberies with a firearm are down by 45%.

**4. Violent Crime Impact Team or VCIT**

On June 1, 2004, DOJ announced the formation of the Violent Crime Impact Team or "VCIT" initiative led by ATF. Deployed in 15 cities, VCITs focus law enforcement efforts on the most violent individuals and their associates – arresting the "worst of the worst." Philadelphia was fortunate to be one of the cities where VCIT has been deployed. In Philadelphia, we have an outstanding partnership among the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, ATF, the Philadelphia Police Department, DEA, the U.S. Marshals Office, and the Pennsylvania Bureau of Narcotics Investigation with the express goal of decreasing the number of violent crimes committed with firearms in Philadelphia's 16<sup>th</sup> Police District. These law enforcement entities bring together their areas of expertise to aggressively pursue violent criminals in that district. The U.S. Marshals' participation allows the team to leverage the fugitive status of many of the offenders. DEA's investigative expertise with drug distributing organizations is an important tool. The police department brings its street knowledge of the district to the team.

The integrated approach has brought a measure of success to the program nationwide. Locally, during the first six months of VCIT operation in the 16th district, July 1 to December 31, 2004, the number of homicides and violent felonies in the district dropped dramatically. The monthly average for violent crime committed with firearms was the lowest in four years and

homicides by firearm dropped almost 70%. These results demonstrate the important role VCIT plays in the fight against violent crime in Philadelphia.

**5. The Hobbs Act Task Force**

In September 2002, the USAO and the FBI, as part of our PSN program, established the Hobbs Act Robbery Task Force to aggressively target criminals who commit serial armed robberies of convenience stores, corner groceries, gas stations, pharmacies and liquor stores. Our aim is to deter such serial offenders from preying on local commercial establishments by subjecting violators to tough mandatory minimum sentences. Since September 2002 more than 100 defendants have been convicted and sentenced in federal court to an average period of incarceration of more than 21 years. In addition to taking violent, serial offenders off the streets for long periods of time, the FBI has used these convictions to obtain information about other violent crimes. Again, defendants facing lengthy mandatory sentences have provided the FBI and local law enforcement with information used to go after other violent offenders. In Lehigh County, law enforcement officials were ecstatic that a Hobbs Act robbery prosecution of nine defendants involved in 12 armed robberies of restaurants, bars and other businesses, ultimately led to the conviction of Jeremy Fontanez, the leader of the robbery group, for the brutal murder of an employee of an Allentown sportsbar. Other defendants, eager at the chance to reduce their lengthy federal sentences, cooperated with the FBI and implicated Fontanez.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, we have seen first hand that coordination among law enforcement officials and the committed involvement of churches and other community groups has been indispensable in combating violent crime. When we have marshaled the expertise of law enforcement and join

it with the public's involvement in the initiative, we have seen a dramatic down turn in violence in the district. There is every reason to believe that the same type of coordinated efforts can produce dramatic results in the area of juvenile violence.

Thank you.

Presentation of the School District of Philadelphia  
Before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee

“Kids Killing Kids: Addressing Escalating Youth Violence”

Remarks by  
Paul G. Vallas, CEO  
School District of Philadelphia

June 13, 2005  
National Constitution Center

Good morning Senator Specter and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Thank you for allowing me to make brief comments on youth violence. In my five minutes, I will discuss the initiatives undertaken by the District that I feel have been most beneficial in reducing violence. In addition, I will discuss policy principles that will assist in further reducing violence.

Prior to beginning my comments, I want to thank Senator Specter for his invaluable support to the School District of Philadelphia. His leadership and support have allowed for the District to establish and fund a 40,000 student summer program and valuable after school academic programs for three straight years. His efforts have directly led to increasing the number of schools that have made Adequate Yearly Progress under the No Child Left Behind legislation from 22 to 160. His support has provided countless young people with a safe environment and I think we can all agree that giving kids a place to go after school and in the summer is a very important tool in our anti-violence tool box. The District and our 200,000 students, their parents and families owe Senator Specter a debt of gratitude, and we appreciate his continued support.

Schools are often the safest place in a community. However, violence continues to persist in many of our communities and neighborhoods.

In 2004, like many Philadelphians I was heartbroken by the shooting of Faheem Thomas Childs in front of Pierce Elementary School. Faheem was going about his day as he always did traveling to school when he was caught in the crossfire of rival drug gangs and shot. The tragic death of Faheem is something that will always stay with me and is a reminder that the role of schools has changed dramatically in that they are no longer confined to instruction. Rather, the tragic death of Faheem is a reminder that schools can and should play a much larger role in guaranteeing the safety of students, both in their schools and communities, as well as in the reduction of violence in the lives of young people.

The death of Faheem also reminds us that despite our best efforts, much work remains to be done to reduce youth violence. A recent report by Public / Private Ventures concerning the Philadelphia Youth Violence Prevention Partnership entitled, "Alive at 25, Reducing Youth Violence Through Monitoring and Support," highlights many of the factors that can shield children from exposure to specific risks for violence. These protective factors include an intolerant attitude toward deviance and violence, a commitment to school, positive peers, and a strong attachment to parents and religious commitment.

The protective factors highlighted by the Public / Private Ventures report are at the cornerstone of the District's violence prevention and reduction initiatives. By working with partners ranging from the city to faith based institutions, the District has implemented several programs that we believe will assist us in continuing to reduce youth violence through the protective factors discussed in the YVRP Report. These programs include:

- *Communities of Faith Partnership.* Recognizing that Communities of faith can have an enormous impact on children and in preventing violence, in 2004, the District launched a Faith Based Partnership to collaborate with communities of faith to improve the quality of life for our children. The \$3.0 million program partners with faith based institutions to organize parent patrols in schools, organize voluntary after-school clubs, coordinate after school gospel choirs, implement mentoring programs, and assist with crisis intervention.
- *Youth Net Centers.* As part of our faith-based partnership, the District is opening a Youth-Net center in each of the District's nine regions. Through the program, 40,000 students will receive over one million hours of tutoring, mentoring and recreational activity. The first center opened this spring at Bluford Elementary in West Philadelphia.
- *Parental Involvement.* Because a strong and positive attachment to parents and guardians is crucial to reducing violence, the District has launched several creative parent involvement programs. These include our efforts to hire 2,000

parents to reach out to and engage the most difficult to reach parents. The \$1.7 million program will utilize parents to staff parent help desks, form parent patrols to monitor schools, and assist in truancy outreach. One of the goals of the parental involvement program is to stem violence by engaging more parents in the lives of their children, schools, and the community.

The strength of the District's parent involvement program was recently recognized by the William Penn Foundation. The foundation awarded the District almost \$750,000 to establish a pilot program at Bok High School in the South Region, Austin Meehan Middle School in the East Region and Benjamin Franklin High School in the Central Region. Grant funds will be used to inform parents on District programs, parenting skills, and the leadership skills necessary to allow parents to assume a leadership role in the schools and in the community.

- *Juvenile Justice Curriculum.* We have also worked with the District Attorney, Lynne Abraham, to establish a juvenile justice curriculum to instruct all middle school children about juvenile justice and criminal justice. The curriculum will instruct young people to make responsible, law abiding choices and the value of non-violence in addition to teaching the value of crime-free behavior and constitutional law.
- *After School Programs.* The District also conducts an after-school extended-day program in every elementary school. The \$15.0 million program is conducted Monday through Thursday. The first one-hour and fifteen minutes of the program is dedicated to mathematics and literacy and the remaining forty-five minutes of the program is dedicated to enrichment programs such as art and music. The program currently serves an estimated 28,000 children in grades K-8.
- *Special Programs.* In addition to our long-term programs, the District also provides special programs from time to time to remind students of the value of

non-violence. During my tenure at the District we have implemented several such programs including:

- *Student Anti-Violence Conference.* In the last two years over 1,000 students have attended our Saturday conference workshops on Bullying, Conflict Resolution, Self-Esteem, Sexual Harassment, Truancy and School Climate and Safety.
- *Safe Night Philadelphia.* Safe Night Philadelphia is a city-wide effort coordinated by the District to address the issue of youth safety one night at a time. The concept of Safe Night originated in Milwaukee, WI in the mid-1990s as a response to rising youth homicide rates. Safe Night gives young people the opportunity to be safe and have fun, connect with local community youth organizations, and learn non-violent ways to resolve conflict. On June 3, 2005, the District along with the Police Athletic League, and the City of Philadelphia, the YMCA, and faith and community partners hosted 300 separate Safe Night events across Philadelphia.
- *Project Peace.* The District, along with the Pennsylvania Bar Association and the Pennsylvania Attorney General, is in the process of implementing a peer mediation program in sixteen schools. It is our intention to expand the program to all District K-8 schools over the next few years. Project PEACE works to reduce conflict and violence in schools by teaching students how to discuss and mediate disagreements peacefully. It empowers children, who are still in the formative years, with the important life-skills that promote constructive communication, problem-solving, critical-thinking and self-esteem. Children become active participants in governing behavior in their classrooms by taking on the role of mediator and using the mediation process. With the help of neutral peer mediators, conflicts can be settled in a positive manner, benefiting the school climate as a whole.

While we have not entirely eliminated violence in our schools, we are making serious headway as a result of our efforts. Recent district incident reports show much

progress as well as the need to do more. In comparison to the same time last year, assaults on teachers and administrators are down 10%, drug and alcohol offenses are down 6.9%, morals offenses are down 5.0% and rapes and attempted rapes are down 10%. Weapons offenses are down 60%. However, violence remains an issue. (This year student shootings of students are up from 2 to 6 and assaults are up 6.6%.) On the whole, offenses are down 0.06%. It is important to note that the District records incidents on a 24 hour 7 day a week basis and incidents recorded include incidents occurring in side and outside of school.

As CEO of the District, it is not enough for me to talk about these programs and their statistical results; I am also an active participant in them. You will find me and my staff at many of the events and programs mentioned in my testimony. On any given day or night, my Chief of Staff might be coordinating an anti-violence event at a high school, while my Government Relations team is coordinating a peer mediation event at a local elementary school. In short, to me they are more than programs, they are a governing philosophy.

Before finishing my statement, I would like to offer a few brief policy principles that I feel will assist in further developing the successes found in our programs:

- *To be successful violence prevention must be coordinated.* We support looking at programs and equipment that will allow for greater coordination among local agencies in tracking and dealing with chronically and habitually disruptive students. According to the Public / Private Ventures Report, one of the keys to the success of YVRP has been the coordination among the many participating groups and agencies. That coordination could be even further enhanced through technology.
- *Students at risk to engage in violent acts benefit from specialized attention.* Many of the students most likely to engage in violent acts can benefit from specialized attention. To deal with this issue, the District has created an eight week character education and counseling service for

disruptive students. The goal of the program is to eliminate the need to suspend students who commit Level 1 offenses of the student code of conduct or who have experienced excessive absences or lateness. The program requires that parents participate in the Saturday program to learn strategies to assist their children in minimizing anti-social behavior, avoid conflicts, and improve communications skills. The program currently exists at 22 sites and is worth looking at by this Committee. Again, the YVRP report highlighted the specialized attention granted by individuals ranging from Parole Officers to Street Workers as being an essential element to the success of the program.

- *Students need constructive alternatives to violence.* Summer and after-school programs provide a viable alternative to violence. There should be no doubt that the 40,000 students participating in the District's summer program or that the 28,000 students in after school programs are engaging in activities that keep them away from violence. However, viable alternatives are needed for those not in a specified program. Specifically, it is important to consider ways to get children involved in constructive alternatives to violence. One such way would be to provide funding mechanisms for summer training and employment. Through direct funds or tax credits, it is conceivable that children who are learning about topics and skills in school to take that knowledge and apply it through employment co-op and internship programs in the summer.

Finally, we have included additional information about many of the items discussed in my testimony in the binders that you have received. The binders also include information on successful programs in Boston and Chicago.

Thank you for allowing me to testify. I will be glad to answer any questions that you may have and I look forward to continuing to work with the committee on this important issue.