

1 COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
2 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
3 JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

4 PUBLIC HEARING
5 RE: Crime, Drugs, Guns & Violence in
6 the Commonwealth

7 * * * *

8 Stenographic report of public hearing
9 held at Colorado Community Center,
10 2243-57 North 20th Street
11 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

12 Friday, April 13, 2007
13 10:00 a.m.

14 HON. THOMAS R. CALTAGIRONE, Chairman
15 HONORABLE JEWELL WILLIAMS, Host

16 MEMBERS OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

17 HON. DAYLIN LEACH HON. KATHY MANDERINO
18 HON. DWIGHT EVANS HON. JOHN RYAN
19 HON. TONY PEYTON

20 REPORTED BY: Tracey L. Pinsky, CCR, RPR

21 * * * *

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	SPEAKER	PAGE
1		
2	Victoria Greene	6
3	Julius Coker	10
4	Sylvester Johnson, Police Commissioner	20
5	Honorable W. Wilson Goode, Jr.	32
6	Honorable Councilman Darrell Clarke Philadelphia City Council, 5th District	42
7		
8	Sergeant Jonathan Josie Narcotics Strike Force, Philadelphia Police Department & Philadelphia Guardian Civic League	57
9		
10	Honorable Lynne Abraham District Attorney, City of Philadelphia	69
11		
12	Wayne Jacobs Executive Director X-Offenders for Community Empowerment	103
13		
14	Dr. Chuck Williams Director, Adolescent Violence Reduction Partnership	110
15		
16	Zeelyna Wise Staff Coordinator, Adolescent Violence Reduction Partnership, Congreso de Latinos Unidos	119
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		

0003

1 REP. CALTAGIRONE: We'd like to get
2 started with the hearing. This is the House
3 Judiciary Committee. I'm Chairman Tom Caltagirone
4 from Reading, Burks County. And I'd like the
5 members that are present here if they would
6 introduce themselves. And I'd like to start with
7 my right and our host to my left.

8 REP. EVANS: I'd like to yield to
9 the gentleman whose district it is, Representative
10 Jewell Williams.

11 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Jewell Williams
12 from right here.

13 REP. WILLIAMS: Representative
14 Jewell Williams. I was actually born in this
15 building. Not in this spot, this was formerly a
16 hospital. And we certainly welcome you to this
17 judiciary hearing. And we thank our Chairman for
18 allowing us to have it, it's well needed in our
19 neighborhood. Thank you.

20 REP. EVANS: My name is Dwight
21 Evans. And I've joined with the Chairman of the
22 Judiciary Committee, Representative Tom
23 Caltagirone, I thank him, this is the -- we've
24 done 11 hearings, I think this is number nine. So

0004

1 we have been traveling around the state. Last
2 week it was in Pittsburgh, Wilkinsburg, Reading,
3 Chester, Erie; and we have been discussing this
4 issue about violence, which is not just an issue
5 in the City of Philadelphia. And we have been
6 talking about the question around what can we do
7 about common sense gun policies, issues that we
8 have, and how can we address it. Jewell Williams,
9 who was rather bashful, I can't believe he was as
10 bashful as he was, but, you know, in a sense this
11 movement started again in February 2004, not too
12 far from Jewell's district, I think it was 22nd
13 and Lehigh, with Faheem Thomas-Childs, a ten year
14 old, who was shot and killed outside of his
15 school.

16 And Jewell lead an effort in terms
17 of marching people. We started the blueprint for
18 a safer Philadelphia as a result of that march.
19 So from that march Jewell Williams and Tom
20 Caltagirone from Bucks County we've had these
21 hearings and moving around talking to people
22 about, what are the things we can do and put in
23 place regarding gun safety and other things to
24 make violence less in our community. So I just

0005

1 wanted to put in perspective the purpose of these
2 hearing that we are working together.

3 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you,
4 Dwight.

5 Daylin.

6 MR. LEACH: Representative Daylin
7 Leach of Montgomery County. Thrilled to be here.

8 REP. MANDERINO: Good morning.
9 Kathy Manderino representative for here in
10 Philadelphia.

11 MR. RYAN: I'm John Ryan, I'm the
12 executive director for the House Judiciary
13 Committee.

14 MR. CALTAGIRONE: I'd just like to
15 say, for the record, that Dwight and I have worked
16 very, very closely over all of our years in the
17 legislature, and I have complete trust and
18 confidence in Dwight and the work that we are
19 doing together on this issue. And Dwight has been
20 the point person leading the charge on trying to
21 get some sense out of what's been going on in our
22 Commonwealth in your beautiful City of
23 Philadelphia.

24 And I want to tell you one thing,

0006

1 and I have all the faith and confidence in this
2 man right beside of me, because I think he would
3 do an excellent job for you here in Philadelphia
4 as your next mayor, and that's coming from me
5 personally. Because I've worked with this man for
6 all the years we've been together in the
7 legislature. And he has the heart and sole about
8 what he really wants to do to help people to turn
9 things around. And I believe totally in Dwight
10 Evans, and I think he's a great man, great leader,
11 and we're going to try to wrestle with this
12 problem until we come up with a solution.

13 REP. EVANS: I just want to say,
14 Jewell, do you have the voter registration form?
15 We can register Tom at this election. I'll turn
16 it over to the chairman with the first witness.

17 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you. We'll
18 start off with the first witness, if you would
19 introduce yourself for the record, and then you
20 can go with it.

21 MS. GREEN: My name is Victoria
22 Greene I am the founder of a grassroots
23 organization named Every Murder Is Real. I formed
24 this organization after the horrendous murder of

0007

1 my only son Emir Greene. My son died due to gun
2 violence, he was shot in the back seven times. My
3 son was murdered March 26, th 1997, that year
4 there were 416 homicides and now ten years later
5 the homicide rate is still climbing. The murder
6 of my son was the end to all his hopes and dreams
7 and devastated my family altering the very fabric
8 of our lives. I am here to put a face on gun
9 violence specifically homicide. It is a sad
10 misconception that the crime of murder leaves
11 behind no victims; some of the most devastated
12 victims of crime are homicide co-victims. Left
13 behind to piece together their shattered lives, to
14 make sense of insanity. These are the people that
15 I work with.

16 In the past thirty days my
17 organization has worked with forty seven people
18 all affected by gun violence, homicide by
19 firearms. Cause of death multiple gunshot wounds.
20 The availability of guns in my community is
21 horrendous. You can get a gun but you can't get
22 health coverage, you can get a gun but education
23 is poor at best. We are in a state of emergency,
24 no one is safe with the prolific amount of guns on

0008

1 the street. When you have guns, drugs, and gangs
2 and law abiding citizens who do not feel protected
3 the wall of civilization is rapidly crumbling.

4 I support "Common sense gun policies
5 that State Rep. Dwight Evans has introduced".
6 Our community should be allowed to enact our own
7 gun laws our very lives are at risk. Our
8 communities are in a state of trauma. We are
9 talking about saving human lives. There is no
10 comparison to the rights of a person to hunt
11 animals and the rights of a person to live. The
12 old cliché that guns don't kill people kill is
13 just that old and obsolete. Guns in the hands of
14 people kill. Talk to Joe Davis a paraplegic since
15 1981, a gunshot victim. Shot in the back by a
16 fourteen year old. Tell that to Jamie Clark whose
17 eight year old daughter's father was killed in
18 South Philadelphia July 15, 2006 and breaks out in
19 tears every time she sees a memorial on the street
20 with teddy bears and candles. Forty-two year old
21 Charles Baldwin killed by a stray bullet while he
22 was getting dressed for work in his own home. Ms.
23 Anita Small whose daughters' boyfriend pulled out
24 a gun in a heated argument and the end result was

0009

1 her husband and the boyfriend shot each other in
2 her home.
3 These are the faces and the carnage of gun
4 violence. These are some of the people that
5 E.M.I.R. has helped. Government officials picture
6 these victims and their stories When you consider
7 legislation and strategies to reduce gun violence.
8 If we are to have communities where commerce,
9 culture and education are to thrive, we must have
10 safety. I personally have sat in my own living
11 room and looked out of my window to witness a
12 young man shooting at another person. This is
13 becoming a common experience for those of us
14 living in Philadelphia. These gun policies need
15 to be passed now, where is the sense of urgency
16 and outrage? Everyday lives are lost because of
17 gun violence. Are we not human? The majority of
18 homicides in this city are African men between the
19 ages of 17-24. I ask again are we not human? In
20 the year 2007 the question still hangs in the air,
21 does this government value the lives of the poor
22 and disenfranchised?

23 And I'm finished.

24 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you,

0010

1 Victoria, that's very, very good.

2 Dwight?

3 REP. EVANS: This is my favorite
4 person. Victoria has been a part of a play called
5 "Beyond The Walls", that's the first time I got to
6 meet Victoria and to hear Victoria's story. And
7 if anybody really hears her story, you really know
8 that she really puts her face on it. Victoria --
9 and I think Victoria's daughter is a police
10 officer.

11 MS. GREEN: Yes, she is a sergeant
12 in the 19th district.

13 REP. EVANS: Victoria's on this
14 obviously because what has happened to her son, as
15 well as her daughter is out there every single
16 day. Thank you.

17 MS. GREEN: You're welcome.

18 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you.

19 We'll next hear from Julius Coker.
20 He's a junior at Dobbins High School.

21 MR. COKER: Good morning. Hello
22 everyone. Hi. My name is Julius Coker in
23 relation to the overflow of drugs, violence, and
24 guns in our streets. I attended a funeral several

0011

1 weeks ago at Deliverance Evangelistic Church for a
2 young man named John. He graduated Dobbins High
3 School, class of 2006. And when I was at his
4 funeral there was -- it was mournful people. And
5 there was people there talking about how they want
6 revenge on what happened. What happened was he
7 was driving in a car and they saw him, whoever his
8 rivals were, and they shot him and he ran into a
9 corner store. And as I was at this funeral there
10 were people my age talking about how they want
11 revenge on these people, and what they can do to
12 get these people back. And as I looked around I
13 don't see many young people, and it seems like it
14 is the young people that is doing everything. And
15 what can we do to stop the fighting. I mean,
16 because something leads up to gun violence.
17 there -- when I -- when I am in school I see many
18 fights. I attend Dobbins High School and Dobbins
19 has an abundant amount of fights a year. And as I
20 see those fights I look at myself and I look at my
21 friends and I wonder why. And if we can stop it,
22 nip it in the bud, if we can get inside my
23 friends' heads and see what's wrong, if we could
24 stop them, have people to talk to these people,

0012

1 and see what is it that creates this negativity
2 that overflows all of our schools.

3 And that's basically what I would
4 like to know, what can we do? Because I think
5 that's what leads up to gun violence, it's what we
6 do before.

7 REP. EVANS: Let me ask you a
8 question. I think you obviously hit it right on
9 the head. Can you talk a little bit about this
10 anger and revenge? I understand what you just
11 described your friend got killed and, obviously,
12 some people want to get back revenge. Talk to in
13 terms of your thoughts a little bit to us in
14 dealing with this aspect of revenge, what you
15 think, any suggestions, ideas, thoughts.

16 MR. COKER: I think we need to talk
17 to these people. I mean, if we just -- there
18 would be no revenge, there -- we wouldn't have the
19 problems of going to an 18 year old's funeral, we
20 could stop it, we could stop it before all of this
21 ever happens. If we could speak to our young
22 people and see what is wrong, I mean, because,
23 personally, me just disciplining and just putting
24 them in jail isn't doing much from what I see. I

0013

1 think we need to talk to these people and see
2 what's wrong.

3 REP. EVANS: What would you say to
4 them? How old are you?

5 MR. COKER: I'm 16 years old.

6 REP. EVANS: Then as a 16 year old,
7 obviously, none of us on this panel will get to
8 see 16 again.

9 Talk to us. I mean, just take a
10 minute and talk to us, I mean, we are the ones who
11 make the laws, you've got your chance to talk to
12 us from a 16-year old. What exactly are we
13 missing? What is it that we are missing that we
14 are not seeing about dealing with 16 year olds, 15
15 year olds? What is it you think we are missing?

16 MR. COKER: I think we are going
17 straight to the consequences instead of seeing
18 what is wrong. And that's what I'm trying to say.
19 I mean, there is -- even when I had got in trouble
20 before, I mean, we all have our wrongs, there is
21 no way -- there is no interventions to where we
22 can actually sit down and see what is inside our
23 heads, just what is wrong. I want to know what's
24 going on? Are you scared when you walk home? I

0014

1 mean, what is it that makes you want to come to
2 school. What is going on at home that makes you
3 want to come to school and fight. And fights is
4 definitely what leads up to gun violence. So we
5 just -- that's it.

6 REP. EVANS: Thank you.

7 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you,
8 Chairman Dwight. We have a problem in Reading,
9 and I'm wondering if you are having the same
10 problem here in this section of Philadelphia as a
11 City with young people, programs, jobs.
12 Activities wholesome activities and involvement of
13 whether it's the church or the schools or social
14 services or civic organizations, are their enough
15 outlets for young people to keep them involved in
16 active -- over the years a lot of this stuff has
17 gone by the waist side, there are a lot of
18 different things for young people. The more I
19 look around I see there is fewer and fewer things
20 for young people, other than getting involved in
21 gangs and drugs and violence. In your school, and
22 the students that you associate with, are there
23 enough activities for those young people that they
24 don't get involved with the wrong crowd or do the

0015

1 wrong things, or is it kind of limited?

2 MR. COKER: It's definitely limited.

3 I mean, we -- every year at Dobbins we have a
4 annual fashion show, because one of our majors at
5 Dobbins is fashion design. And every year during
6 the fashion show, last year I spoke on NBC 10
7 Harry Harrison about the riot after the fashion
8 show. And when we were inside the fashion show it
9 was a lot of -- how can I put this -- tension. It
10 was tension between everyone because everyone
11 wanted to look better than everyone. And everyone
12 wanted to see who walked better. And then when we
13 got outside, it was -- it just all broke a part.
14 I mean, everyone just started fighting. I didn't
15 know what it was. I suggested to one of my
16 teachers, maybe we can put on a musical at Dobbins
17 High School, or something like that, just to bring
18 a positive light to what we do. I mean, just to
19 showcase our talent and not showcase everything
20 that we do wrong.

21 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Okay. Thank you.

22 MR. LEACH: Thank you. I have a
23 question for you. I have always found that -- or
24 at least I've always thought in reading about

0016

1 this, I try to read about this sort of thing as
2 much as I can. My wife is a psychologist, and
3 she's dealt with high school age kids. When we
4 talk about this, the feeling is that there is a
5 certain hopelessness or inability to see the
6 future, there is a feeling that there's not a good
7 future ahead, so there is -- there is more of a
8 focus on doing things now that -- regardless of
9 consequences. And I'm wondering when you talk to
10 your friends and so forth what do you -- what is
11 the feeling you get about how they feel about
12 their future? Do they talk about, well, I want to
13 do this, I want to go to school, I want to -- this
14 is the career I want. This is what I want to do.
15 Is that a subject of frequent conversation among
16 your peer group.

17 MR. COKER: No, not at all, not
18 frequent. We do talk about it, but very rarely.
19 Usually when I talk to my friends it's they
20 usually talk about, yeah, such and such happened
21 today, and we are going to beat them up, and this
22 and that. And, personally, I don't think our
23 parents are teaching right from wrong from what I
24 see. I don't see anybody -- because when I hear

0017

1 my friends say these types of thing, I wonder
2 where are you getting it from. And I see parents
3 come up to Dobbins wanting to fight the students
4 as well. I'm wondering where is the balance
5 between right and wrong. We need someone to teach
6 my peers.

7 MR. LEACH: And my final question,
8 if you think of two or three people in your school
9 that you know of, or sort of the most, or very
10 active in the whole fighting situation, if you
11 asked them what they see themselves doing in
12 10 years, what would they say?

13 MR. COKER: Actually I just spoke
14 to -- I don't want to say her name -- but she says
15 she wants to live in Florida, married at age of 26
16 with two children and be a chef at a five star
17 restaurant.

18 MR. LEACH: That's something.

19 MR. COKER: At the same time she
20 would turn around and get into a brawl in the
21 hallway. And I wonder, I mean, do you know that
22 these things won't help you in your path to
23 college and in your path to be a chef at a five
24 star restaurant. And I did explain that to her.

0018

1 But maybe if we could have people like me speak to
2 my -- my class, I mean because guys your age I
3 don't think they want to listen.

4 MR. LEACH: I can barely hear let
5 alone listen.

6 MR. COKER: If we could have the
7 leaders in my age group speak to the children,
8 maybe we could make a difference. Because I think
9 they'd listen to us and listen to what we have to
10 say. We are at their level and we have that power
11 to interact with one another.

12 MR. LEACH: Julius, I was whispering
13 with Representative Manderino, and we were both
14 curious, what makes you different? What has made
15 you different? What in your life has resulted in
16 you not being interested in fighting and brawling
17 all the time and being focused on what you want to
18 do with your life? What was the difference in
19 your life?

20 MR. COKER: I found what I love to
21 do. I love music, and I attended the All City
22 Choir for Philadelphia. And I found what I love
23 to do. I went out there and I searched. And I
24 wanted to see what do I want to do in life. And

0019

1 when I found it, that put me on the right path to
2 go to college and be a music composer or a music
3 educator, and that's what I saw. And maybe we
4 could get all of my peers to see what they want to
5 do.

6 MR. LEACH: Because what I want to
7 know, you are welcome to comment, but it's sort of
8 a rhetorical question, I want to know why you felt
9 compelled to look for this. And some of your
10 peers do not feel compelled to look for what they
11 want to do in life and follow that path. And I
12 want to know is there a point in time where an
13 event happens or something happens that makes some
14 kids go one way and some kids go another, that's
15 really the nub of what I'd like to see.

16 All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 MR. COKER: If I could say one more
18 thing? I think as my -- Mrs. Karen Chapelle, she
19 the disciplinarian at Dobbins High School, and
20 what she was saying is we need to re-language the
21 code of ethics in America. We need to see what is
22 the code and what is wrong, what is -- what is --
23 what are my peers speaking of. And we need to see
24 what it is and switch it around and see if we

0020

1 could put everything in a positive light and not
2 everything so dark in our world. But thank you.

3 REP. WILLIAMS: One more question.
4 First, let me just commend you, Young Man.

5 MR. COKER: Thank you.

6 REP. WILLIAMS: You said something
7 very key, and that is continue to speak out,
8 continue to tell us what your needs are. And not
9 just because I went to Dobbins and you are in
10 Dobbins now, I started at Dobbins on -- just doing
11 what you are doing speaking out. And it will take
12 you into a better road of life. But continue to
13 talk to your peers. Because we don't know. We
14 try. I have two -- I have a 19-year old and a
15 20-year old, and I'm continuously trying to
16 shelter them and try to be a part of their lives.
17 And some of the things you said is that some of
18 these young folks don't have anybody who is a part
19 of their life. So continue to talk. Continue to
20 tell us what we should be doing, so we can craft
21 legislation and laws that will help you as a young
22 man and many young Pennsylvanians.

23 Thank you.

24 MR. COKER: Thank you.

0021

1 REP. CALTAGIRONE: We'd like to next
2 have your Police Commissioner from Philadelphia
3 Police Department, Sylvester Johnson.

4 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Good morning
5 Representative Jewell and other members of the
6 House Judiciary Committee. My name is
7 Commissioner Sylvester Johnson and I'm here to
8 support the work of Representative Jewell and
9 other members of the Philadelphia Delegation to
10 pass common sense gun laws in Harrisburg.

11 I recently testified about the
12 impact of gun violence in Philadelphia. As I said
13 then, over 80% of the homicides in Philadelphia
14 are historically committed with handguns. As of
15 today, there have been well over 400 shootings
16 since the beginning of the year. As a result, an
17 entire generation of our children are being
18 killed, crippled or locked up for life. This is
19 no surprise - it's in the newspaper everyday.

20 But some of the less obvious impacts
21 are upon the families that are left behind. What
22 the newspapers rarely show are the grandmothers
23 left to raise the babies of those killed or locked
24 away for life. I see the pain in the families

0022

1 that are forced to care for the survivors. It's
2 not TV. Gunshot wounds leave devastating lifelong
3 physical and psychological injuries. The families
4 are left to cope.

5 And then there is the larger
6 impact-the loss of our sense of security and the
7 hopelessness and despair that follows. There are
8 good and decent people in this community who have
9 become prisoners in there own homes-afraid to go
10 outside, afraid to let their children play
11 outside, afraid to walk to the grocery store. And
12 even in their homes they're not safe. Sadly, we
13 have just seen the tragedy of one stray bullet
14 ripping through a window - an innocent victim was
15 shot down in his own bedroom! As the Police
16 Commissioner, I will do everything and anything
17 possible to prevent the shootings, but policing
18 alone is not the answer. The problem of why so
19 many young people turn to violence is much more
20 than a police problem. We need to focus on the
21 cause of this violence. At what point does a
22 young man care so little about his own life that
23 he will shoot another human being for just
24 disrespecting him? I could put a thousand more

0023

1 police on the street tomorrow and will not be able
2 to prevent this type of violence. We, as a
3 government, must work together with the social
4 sciences, the universities, the schools, the
5 clergy, and the communities to find the answers
6 and to develop a plan - a wide-ranging plan that
7 will address the causes of such violence.

8 The availability of illegal guns is
9 obviously part of the problem. So, taking illegal
10 guns off the street will not solve the all the
11 problems. We must keep our eyes on the bigger
12 problem of why people are now so willing to use
13 guns. But, taking illegal guns off the street and
14 out of the hands of children and criminals is a
15 necessary step towards an overall solution.

16 I'm not asking to take guns from
17 lawful citizens. I'm asking for common sense
18 legislation; such as, One-Gun-a-Month and
19 Reporting Requirements for Stolen Guns. I don't
20 believe this is too much to ask when so much is at
21 stake.

22 This concludes my testimony. Once
23 again, I thank Representative Jewell and other
24 members of the Philadelphia delegation for their

0024

1 help and support. I would be happy to answer any
2 questions you may have at this time.

3 Thank you.

4 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you
5 Commissioner. Let me just say I think what you've
6 said here in your testimony is so, so true, and it
7 is true all over the Commonwealth. It's almost
8 like we cannot have a police officer at every
9 single corner and it rests in the hands I think,
10 as it is rightfully so, of the total community,
11 you know, these children belong to somebody, they
12 are somebody's family. And every time I see it on
13 TV at night, whether it's Reading or Philadelphia
14 or anywhere, you know, you just shake your head
15 and you think to yourself the impact that you were
16 saying about on these families, the murder victims
17 and their families and, of course, the others that
18 are affected by it.

19 Dwight?

20 REP. EVANS: Thank you,
21 Commissioner.

22 Commissioner, in terms of what we
23 always hear, we have been having all these
24 hearings, the question of enforcing it.

0025

1 Obviously, one gun a month I support, tell me a
2 little bit about on the issue of enforcement. I
3 saw in the paper the other day the DA announced
4 something about the state we put up \$5 million
5 on -- with the Attorney General. Tell me how is
6 the enforcement process worked about going after
7 those who do have handguns on the street.

8 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Well, let me
9 say this to you, you know, the news people keep
10 saying constantly that we should be harder on
11 crime, at least I should be harder on crime. The
12 facts are last year we locked up 74,000 people in
13 the City of Philadelphia, more than we've ever
14 locked up here in the City of Philadelphia. We've
15 also confiscated over 6,000 weapons and
16 \$140 million worth of drugs. What the district
17 attorney did, along with the inspector general,
18 they gave us \$5 million to hire ex-detectives and
19 ex-prosecutors, and right now they are in
20 southwest division I think they started in north
21 central division.

22 Last week we announced the fact that
23 they have gone off the straw purchases. Straw
24 purchases are people who go out there and buy

0026

1 guns. In order to get a gun here in the City of
2 Philadelphia, even to carry a gun, as long as you
3 don't have a criminal record or a record mental
4 illness, you can buy a gun. The facts are that
5 87 percent of the people who are committing
6 murders have criminal records. 84 percent of
7 those who are being murdered have criminal
8 records, so they can't buy guns. Last year we had
9 over 2,500 people in the City of Philadelphia who
10 had over 25 arrests. So what that \$5 million did
11 is when a person comes in to report a gun lost or
12 stolen, they do an investigation. What she
13 announced Monday or Tuesday, some day last week,
14 as a matter of fact it was this week, they
15 identified 70 cases and locked up 17 people who
16 went out there and bought guns for people and gave
17 them to the criminals. And out of that 70 people
18 investigations they confiscated something like 57
19 weapons along with AK-47 and other weapons. The
20 enforcement is there. But it's the criminal
21 justice system, it's the police, it's the district
22 attorney, and it's the judges, everyone has to be
23 involved in this, including probation officers,
24 parole, and the prisons.

1 So most of the things that happen
2 here in the City of Philadelphia, there is one
3 thing finger being pointed at -- one person being
4 pointed at, and that's the police commissioner.
5 It's not at the judges, it's not at the probation
6 officers, it's not at anybody else, it's at the
7 police. Traditional policing is not working.
8 Only locking people up is not the answer. You
9 will never change the -- it's not about
10 statistics, it's about quality of life. You'll
11 never change the quality of life, if all you are
12 going to do is lock people up. Locking 74,000
13 people, I mean, it's really -- I mean, our prisons
14 are full. What we need is a social -- has to be a
15 holistic type of approach. Jobs have to be
16 involved in it. Education has to be involved in
17 it. Training has to be involved in it. A whole
18 lot of things. The great faith community has to
19 be involved in this. So the enforcement is there.

20 So far this year we've already
21 locked up 19,000 people. So, again, if we lock a
22 person up for a gun and he goes to court and comes
23 right back out in the street, there is no more
24 than we can possibly do except if we catch them

0028

1 with a gun again, lock him up again, and go right
2 back to the same system.

3 REP. EVANS: I asked you the
4 question because one of the thing I said to the
5 chairman as we have these discussions, is that we
6 need to put everything on the table. Those --
7 that question is a question that those of us who
8 think there should be some kind of new gun laws,
9 we hear it often. So what better person to ask
10 you as a police commissioner, but that needs to be
11 put on the table, even as sensitive as it may be,
12 the reality of it is we try to move legislation,
13 we hear over and over again that there is a
14 perception, maybe real or not real, that there is
15 not enforcement taking place. That's why I wanted
16 you to explain the kinds of things that you think
17 you were doing. I want to go back to, so are you
18 saying that you think that initiative that we've
19 done with the Attorney General is working or not
20 working?

21 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: It's
22 definitely working.

23 REP. EVANS: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: As a matter

0029

1 of fact, we had one person who went out there and
2 bought seven different guns from different seven
3 different gun people and gave them to a boyfriend
4 or husband, I'm not sure who it was. And another
5 person bought 10 guns at one time. If you look at
6 the history, if you look at the -- if you examine
7 what's going on with straw purchases in the cities
8 and the state that have straw purchases, it has
9 worked. It gives a family the one gun a month, I
10 think it works. It gives the family enough to
11 have 24 guns a year, and I'm not sure they are
12 going to need anymore than that. But it says we
13 are sending a message to those who are going out
14 there buying guns illegally and given to the
15 criminal element that if you do this, then you are
16 going to be arrested.

17 REP. EVANS: Thank you.

18 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you. We
19 have Representative Tony Peyton that has joined
20 us. And I know Representative Williams has
21 questions.

22 REP. WILLIAMS: Commissioner, let me
23 just thank you for always being committed to come
24 to the community and meet with us. We have

0030

1 traveled all around the state and most of the
2 commissioners or sheriffs or high ranking law
3 enforcement folks normally come before these
4 committees and say, they are not -- they are
5 against one gun a month and they are against
6 reporting of lost and stolen guns. We were
7 just in my colleague's county in Reading, and the
8 sheriff at that county in very angrily tone sort
9 of like jumped all over me because I talk about
10 lost and stolen guns. So, in your opinion, lost
11 and stolen guns would you say it contributes to
12 the majority of crimes that's being committed?

13 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Well, the
14 facts are that 85 percent of our homicides in the
15 City of Philadelphia was committed by a gun.

16 REP. WILLIAMS: A handgun.

17 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: A handgun,
18 85 percent. I belong to the Major City Chief
19 Association, which is 56 police chiefs in the
20 United States and 6 from Canada. And in order to
21 be a major city chief, you have to have a
22 population of 500,000 and a department of over a
23 thousand people. We've collectively went to
24 Washington, D.C. as major city chief and says we

0031

1 are for one gun a month. We are for reporting
2 lost and stolen guns. Guns are not only killing
3 citizens, they are killing police. Any law
4 enforcement that would make a statement like that,
5 is probably in the wrong occupation, in my
6 opinion. You know, guns kill. And we've got --
7 we are talking about so far this year maybe 108
8 homicides but we had well over 400 shootings so
9 far this year in Philadelphia, whereas last year
10 we had 2,000 shootings last year. So the
11 availability of guns and we have the weakest gun
12 laws in the United States is in Pennsylvania. The
13 things we are asking for would not prevent a
14 person who legally wants to have a gun to go
15 hunting, it would not affect them.

16 The common thing to me is if you
17 have a car and the car is stolen, you have to
18 report it. And if the car is not reported, then
19 if anything happens, you are held responsible for
20 it. But you are seeing a police chief saying
21 there shouldn't be a gun, all though, report a
22 lost car but don't report a lost gun, it doesn't
23 make sense. To me, it's common sense you would do
24 that.

0032

1 And most of the people we talk to
2 are in agreements with that. If somebody breaks
3 into a house and steals your guns, you want your
4 guns to be found. Same thing with one gun a month
5 will prevent the straw purchasers going out there
6 and buying numerous amount of guns, 10 guns a day,
7 10 guns a month. And, as I said, the facts are
8 85 percent of those being killed have criminal
9 records, and 84 percent of those that are killing
10 have criminal records and are doing the shooting.
11 We have a problem with illegal guns.

12 REP. WILLIAMS: Thank you,
13 Commissioner.

14 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Commissioner, I
15 thank you, and appreciate it. As I've said in
16 previous hearings, all the respect in the world I
17 give to those that put on the uniform and the
18 badge, because they risk their life every time
19 they go out in the street. And we owe them all a
20 debt of gratitude. I'd like to give you a round
21 of applause.

22 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Thank you
23 very much.

24 REP. CALTAGIRONE: We'll next hear

0033

1 from the Honorable W. Wilson Goode, Jr., the
2 Philadelphia City Council At-Large.

3 MR. GOODE: Good Morning, to the
4 Chair and Members of the Judiciary Committee, my
5 name is W. Wilson Goode, Jr. - an At-Large Member
6 of Philadelphia City Council and Chairman of its
7 Commerce & Economic Development Committee. Let me
8 thank the Honorable Jewell Williams for inviting
9 me to testify. Representative Williams has asked
10 me to talk about the issue of employment as it
11 relates to crime, drugs, violence and the murder
12 rate in this City.

13 I'd like to start by reading a short
14 passage from one of my favorite books. It reads,
15 "At the trial, momma said Charlie Painter asked to
16 speak to the judge in his chambers before the
17 sentence was handed down. Daddy was convicted of
18 assault and sentenced to a year in prison. Momma
19 has always said she believed Daddy was convicted
20 because he slapped Charlie Painter, not because of
21 what he did to her. We were heartbroken. It
22 seemed like our family was being broken apart
23 beyond repair. Daddy left the local jail for
24 prison that August. His prison job was walking

0034

1 the hot, dusty roads serving water to prisoners on
2 the chain gangs. In the months following the
3 trial, my sister in Philadelphia convinced momma
4 to leave North Carolina before daddy got out of
5 prison. Momma and my brothers prepared to leave
6 that January. I was doing well in school and they
7 said I should stay behind with Aunt Lonnie and
8 Uncle Frank Brown to finish out the school term.
9 On January 3, 1954, momma and my brothers left for
10 Philadelphia. I tried to be happy as the moving
11 van and car carrying my family headed north, but
12 my heart was sinking. This was the first time I
13 had ever been separated from my family.
14 Practically speaking, I knew it was only right for
15 me to finish the school term, but I couldn't help
16 thinking I needed to be with my family. With my
17 father in prison, I thought the days of violence
18 and fear were behind me." The young boy later
19 came to Philadelphia, and the next chapter within
20 the book is entitled "So This is Heaven?", with a
21 question mark.

22 It is not a fictional story - the
23 young boy went on to become the first
24 African-American Mayor of Philadelphia. It is a

0035

1 story from my father's autobiography, "In Goode
2 Faith".

3 Needless to say, while many people
4 are aware of my father's award-winning work with
5 the children of prison inmates - many are not
6 aware that the inspiration for his work comes from
7 the fact that he was a child of a prison inmate.
8 The most interesting thing about the story for me
9 is that I did not know it until 1992, with the
10 release of his autobiography. My grandfather
11 actually died five years before its release.

12 I simply remember my grandfather as
13 a loving, hard-working, family man. When he was
14 released from prison, he reconciled with his
15 family, came to Philadelphia and provided for his
16 family. He changed his life.

17 But in the South, my grandfather was
18 a very broken man because of issues of economic
19 frustration - humiliation from the system of
20 sharecropping - and substance abuse. As a grown
21 man, he was not able to provide enough for his
22 family, not because he didn't work from sun up to
23 sun down, but because he was not paid fairly -
24 people cheated him out of his money because of

0036

1 racial discrimination and poor education.
2 I was taught about the discrimination that my
3 family experienced down South. I was also taught
4 to continue to fight for economic fairness and
5 equity in Philadelphia. So, a lot of the work
6 that I've done on City Council has been about
7 creating economic opportunity, and it's because of
8 my family history. The work that my father does
9 with mentoring for the children of prison inmates
10 is because up to 70 percent of them-if we don't
11 engage them in some positive, constructive
12 manner - will go down that same path. And since
13 he was saved from it-through faith, family and
14 community - he wants to see others saved from it.

15 The work that I do to create
16 economic opportunity is because we also see it as
17 saving lives and saving people from what could
18 have been our family experience. But if I were to
19 simply say that all of that is "ancient" family
20 history, it would be misleading.

21 When my father served as Managing
22 Director and as Mayor of this City - he often
23 visited the prisons, as he continues to do - and
24 he would often be greeted by family members who

0037

1 were locked up there - who still needed
2 opportunity. Somehow, the success did not spread
3 throughout the entire family.

4 Two years ago, while a member of
5 City Council, I had a cousin who allegedly, on a
6 crack binge, assaulted someone with a hammer. A
7 lot of people wanted to know how I was going to
8 deal with that issue. Not just politically, but
9 personally.

10 I secluded myself, and my response
11 was to craft living wage legislation because I
12 realized that "livable wages" had to be part of
13 the solution. And, more recently, I crafted
14 legislation that deals directly with the issue of
15 employing ex-offenders to address the rate of
16 recidivism. We know that ex-offenders who do not
17 find employment are three times more likely to
18 recidivate into a pattern of crime, drugs,
19 violence, jail and sometimes - murder.

20 We don't know all the solutions, but
21 we do know part of the solution - it is providing
22 jobs. We need to create more jobs with livable
23 wages. We need to create new economic opportunity
24 where there is none. And we need to better

0038

1 prepare people for those opportunities through new
2 investments in mentoring, education and training.

3 Before I finish, allow me to share
4 some statistics with you. There were 406 murders
5 in Philadelphia last year in 2006. 335 of the 406
6 were blacks, over 80 percent. 296 of the 406 were
7 black males, over 70 percent. 259 of the 406 were
8 black males under the age of 40, over 60 percent.
9 163 of the 406 were black males under 25, over
10 40 percent. In 2006, four out of every ten people
11 murdered were black males under 25. Over 1,000
12 black men have been shot in each of the last
13 three years. Over 75 percent of those shot are
14 black men.

15 Homicide is the leading cause of
16 death for young black men, and Philadelphia
17 Pennsylvania leads the nation. Partly that is
18 related to the fact that when we look at those
19 statistics we also know from the graduation date
20 on more than half of those murdered their
21 graduation rate was less than 25 percent. We also
22 have graduation data on those who were the
23 perpetrators. Of 127 we have data on, only 23
24 graduated, about 18 percent.

1 We see a long vicious cycle that
2 begins with underachievement sometimes in the
3 third grade level. We know people are now
4 beginning to plan the building of prisons based
5 upon third grade testing scores. We know what the
6 cycle is. As people begin to underachieve, they
7 become truant, they drop out, they lack economic
8 opportunity, and we somehow don't grasp it. We
9 have to intervene like the young man talked about
10 earlier. I'm obviously here today to push for
11 state funding for both ex-offender employment
12 incentives and state -- more state funding for
13 public education. To compliment local legislation
14 I have offered combat crime problems in
15 Philadelphia. I understand that there is an
16 ex-offender bill proposed by Representative
17 Charelle Parker, I encourage you to support that.
18 I encourage you to face our schools are in crisis
19 here. To step to the table realizing that
20 education is intertwined with all of these issues.
21 And, of course, if and when you give us the power
22 to enact our own gun laws, we will pass those
23 bills the following week.

24 Thank you very much.

0040

1 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you
2 Councilman Goode.

3 REP. WILLIAMS: Well, I want to
4 thank you.

5 MR. GOODE: Thank you.

6 REP. WILLIAMS: Certainly we
7 continue to create a partnership, and we would
8 hope that we do get the opportunity to pass
9 legislation and have the City of Philadelphia
10 control their own gun laws. If that is happens,
11 I'm certain that under your leadership we will
12 make a economic jump in this economy to put people
13 to work who don't qualify, because they have a
14 record. And, certainly, in these days and times
15 people do deserve a second chance. And I thank
16 you for your work.

17 MR. GOODE: Thank you.

18 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Are there any
19 other questions from the panel?

20 Let me just state one thing. You
21 know, I was a former teacher, I taught Special Ed.
22 I was a social worker. And I ran a production
23 line. And did a few other jobs before I became a
24 ledgiest. I think part of what we need to start

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1 concentrating on with a lot of the young people,
2 not everybody goes to college. And I keep telling
3 people, you know, there is nothing wrong with the
4 trades and crafts and learning these skills,
5 because not only can they work at a full-time job,
6 but they can work outside that full-time job and
7 earn extra money. And I just think that maybe
8 somehow, some way, we need to take a second look
9 at what we are doing wrong in keeping kids in
10 school with education; because if they learn
11 trades and skills, and we get them to stay in
12 school, we can apply those crafts once they are
13 out of school so they can make an earning wage and
14 survive.

15 When you look at students at any
16 given school, you know that they are not all going
17 to go to college. Then you have to think, well,
18 if they stay in school and graduate what are they
19 going to do when they do get out, what type of
20 jobs are going to be available for them. And I
21 keep thinking there are a lot of skills when you
22 think about the plumbers, the electricians, and
23 you all know when you call them what it costs to
24 do a repair job in your own home and the kind of

0042

1 money they make. And I'm thinking, you know,
2 somehow, some way, we've got to get that message
3 across and make a partnership, as you suggested,
4 with those particular type crafts, potentially in
5 the trade schools, and find skills that are needed
6 in our communities all over this state, let alone,
7 Philadelphia.

8 And I want to thank you for your
9 testimony.

10 MR. GOODE: Thank you.

11 REP. CALTAGIRONE: The next would be
12 the Honorable Councilman Darrell Clarke,
13 Philadelphia City Council, 5th district.

14 MR. CLARKE: Good morning, gentlemen
15 and lady. I've submitted my testimony for the
16 record and also submitted a copy of the firearms
17 summary of the bills I have introduced in the City
18 Council of Philadelphia. I'd like to read my
19 testimony into the record, if I may. Good
20 morning, Mr. Chairman. My name is Councilman
21 Darrell Clark. I'm the city councilman for the
22 5th Councilmatic District in the City of
23 Philadelphia.

24 This hearing has a particular

0043

1 importance to me, because I represent tens of
2 thousands of men and women and children whose
3 quality of life is destroyed by gun violence.
4 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

5 Last year 406 people were murdered
6 in Philadelphia. The reasons for their death were
7 sadly familiar, often the victims of perpetrators
8 who were involved in illegal drug business or
9 seeking revenge for perceived disrespect.
10 However, all too how often we read stories of
11 children or men or women who were simply innocent
12 bystanders. The majority of the victims and
13 perpetrators were African American men. Their
14 cause of death is almost uniform, 85 percent by
15 handgun.

16 Throughout the Commonwealth
17 homicides caused by firearms has increased by
18 26 percent from 2000 to 2005 557 Pennsylvanians
19 were killed by a gun in 2005. In 2005 84 percent
20 of all homicides statewide by gun. As horrible as
21 homicide statistics are, they mask the true
22 magnitude of the gun violence epidemic we face in
23 our neighborhoods.

24 According to the City's most recent

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1 report card compiled by the Philadelphia Safe &
2 Sound, there were 920 gunshot victims ages 7 to
3 24, which translates to two and a half gunshot
4 wounds every single day. Our hospitals, nursing
5 homes, and neighborhoods have far too many
6 examples of shooting victims, many of them would
7 done except for the splendid medical care they
8 receive at Temple Hospital and other hospitals in
9 our region.

10 In Philadelphia we've made
11 unprecedented investments in public safety. In
12 FY08 budget now under consideration by the City
13 Council, the mayor asked us to approve a budget
14 for the police department more than 514 million in
15 support of police department in more than 6,420
16 officers.

17 I have sponsored legislation laying
18 groundwork for video surveillance cameras in the
19 neighborhoods across the City. Another strategy
20 that we hope may alleviate some of the criminal
21 activity in our communities. Over the years,
22 however, it has become increasingly clear to me that
23 we cannot police our way out of a problem as
24 earlier referenced by Police Commissioner Johnson,

0045

1 even if we can afford it. If we're not able to
2 tackle it head on, we're simply kidding ourselves.
3 We have a problem, and it is caused by the guns in
4 our communities.

5 Federal Law, the Brady Law,
6 effectively stopped convicted criminals and other
7 prohibited purchasers from directly buying
8 handguns from a gun store. But the Brady Law does
9 not stop straw purchases. Where the individual
10 who may legally purchase a firearm is hired to
11 purchase a firearm from an individual who is
12 either prohibited by law from making a purchase or
13 does not want to be traced. Gun traffickers often
14 employ straw purchasers to buy firearms in bulk.
15 These guns, in turn, are sold on the illegal
16 market often to juveniles. All too frequently
17 these are the guns used in the crimes on the
18 street of Philadelphia.

19 The time has come to put an end to
20 this insanity. The impact of Pennsylvanians
21 proliferation does not stop at our state boards,
22 it is not just a Commonwealth problem. Last year
23 New York City's mayor, Bloomberg, filed suit
24 against 27 gun dealers, some of them in

0046

1 Pennsylvania, alleging illegal gun sales to straw
2 purchasers resulted in the use of those guns in
3 crimes committed in New York. As a March of this
4 year, 12 dealers have agreed to settle permitting
5 monitoring paid for by the New York City.
6 Videotaping of sales and undercover surveillance,
7 which I think is something we need to look at in
8 the State of Pennsylvania, in particular the City
9 of Philadelphia.

10 Here in Philadelphia we are prepared
11 to act to restrict the availability of guns. Last
12 year the Philadelphia Police Department
13 confiscated 5,200 guns, a nine percent increase
14 over the preceding year. Research and experience
15 in our jurisdiction have demonstrated that the
16 right gun laws can make a difference. Where the
17 consequences for the possession of illegal guns
18 are increased to increased penalties and increase
19 of risk of arrest and punishment.

20 In Virginia prior to the enactment
21 of laws of restricting large volume gun sales
22 38 percent of all guns originated in the
23 Southeast, and traced to the Northeast, came from
24 Virginia gun shops. After the law took effect

0047

1 that percentage dropped to 16 percent. That's one
2 gun a month. The implementation of these
3 strategies resulted in 40 percent reduction in the
4 instances of gun-related homicides in Virginia
5 from 1997 to '98. I want to read that again. The
6 implementation of these gun law strategies
7 resulted in a reduction, a 40 percent reduction in
8 incidences of gun-related homicides in Virginia.

9 In March of '99, the City of Las
10 Angeles became the first major city to pass a one
11 gun a month law with strong support for law
12 enforcement. California is the fourth state to
13 curb gun trafficking through this logical
14 approach. In New York City guns are much more
15 difficult to come by. Research indicates \$100
16 guns cost \$600 on the streets of New York, because
17 of the unavailability of those weapons.

18 The general assembly not only allows
19 this destructive access to guns, and all due
20 respect to you, I'm talking about the people that
21 aren't here.

22 REP. CALTAGIRONE: It is true. He's
23 right.

24 REP. WILLIAMS: It is true.

1 MR. CLARKE: But also blocks the
2 right of local jurisdictions like Philadelphia to
3 act aggressively to protect our constituents. Why
4 shouldn't we be able to act locally to restrict
5 access to illegal guns. In 1995 the legislation
6 preempted Philadelphia's ability to reject
7 applications for a permit to carry a gun. Since
8 that permit preemption the total number of permits
9 in Philadelphia has increased from approximately
10 4,500 in 1995 to 31,00 today.

11 News reports from across the
12 Commonwealth carry stories of shootings and gun
13 wars. Recent statewide polls conducted tell us
14 that across the Commonwealth voters rank gun
15 violence as the number two concern behind the cost
16 of healthcare and healthcare insurance. I'm sure
17 if that poll were taken in the City of
18 Philadelphia, it would clearly be number one.

19 The poll found that two or three
20 Pennsylvania voters, 67 percent, believe gun
21 violence is a statewide problem with only a small
22 minority 26 percent perceiving it as a big city
23 problem. That clearly indicates people across the
24 City, although some of the legislators don't

0049

1 believe that, people across the state clearly
2 believe this to be a high priority.

3 A majority of the voters in every
4 region of this state believe that crime and gun
5 violence have increased in the past year and a
6 combination of efforts are needed to stem this
7 tide. Pennsylvania voters overwhelmingly recognize
8 that a comprehensive approach is needed and to
9 halt violence throughout this state.

10 And I want to commend my colleague
11 Councilman Wilson Goode for continuing to strive
12 for a good sense economic development initiative
13 that provides opportunities for some of these
14 individuals out here on the street so that at the
15 end of the day you don't give the people an
16 alternative, because they will eventually end up
17 involved in some criminal activity.

18 Pennsylvania needs stronger gun
19 laws. Weak gun laws compromise local efforts, put
20 at risk the safety of our police and handicap law
21 enforcement efforts beyond our borders. I want
22 you to change the state laws that preempt
23 Philadelphia from enacting gun laws that we know
24 are essential to protecting our residents. I

0050

1 support one gun a month laws. I support lost and
2 stolen gun laws. I support the mandatory
3 requirements. I support proposals which require
4 gun owners to keep weapons in a secured locked
5 box, to require gun safety and training classes,
6 to become certified to own a gun. We need our
7 General Assembly to act now and pass responsible
8 gun control laws. To do no less is a crime.

9 In summary I would just like to say,
10 first, I want to thank you all because I know I
11 you care for coming in the City. And those who
12 live in the City, thank you for coming into the
13 Hood.

14 And my good friend, Jewell Williams,
15 is in his house at this particular time. I want
16 to thank you all for coming here and giving people
17 a sense that some of the legislature does care
18 about this issue. We are extremely concerned. I
19 had the pleasure of growing up in North
20 Philadelphia, and living in North Philly all my
21 life, and I lived through the gang wars, and it
22 was never like this. It was never like this. I
23 mean, this is just totally out of control.

24 So I'm asking you to take a chance,

0051

1 put these Bills in committee. I understand the
2 Chair has agreed to a list of Bills in committee.
3 If you need some support from not only the City
4 Council of Philadelphia, the citizens will be up
5 there in force. We will do whatever it is we need
6 to do. This problem has got to stop, because
7 people in the community are afraid to go out at
8 night. This environment is just not conducive to
9 us having the life that we should -- we so surely
10 need. I just want to thank you. I'm committed to
11 being there four and will do whatever we have to
12 do.

13 Thank you.

14 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you
15 Councilman. I also was a member of North
16 Philadelphia, I lived here for a year when I was
17 going to Temple University, so I got some roots.

18 MR. CLARKE: Did your time in the
19 Hood.

20 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Tony.

21 REP. PEYTON: Thank you very much
22 for your testimony, Councilman, and I applaud you
23 on the legislation that you've introduced to City
24 Council, but what we need to do is give you the

0052

1 right to enact your own gun laws. And we also
2 need to pass one gun a month. You spoke a little
3 bit about the video surveillance cameras. If you
4 can tell me a little bit about where they are
5 currently.

6 MR. CLARKE: Currently we have 18
7 video surveillance cameras as a part of a pilot
8 program that was enacted by the City of
9 Philadelphia Police Department and Voice, the
10 City's Information Office. The interesting
11 statistics that we have gotten so far from these
12 cameras is that in 16 of those locations we have
13 actually had a double digit reduction in crime.
14 In two of the locations where we have not had
15 reduction in crime, it actually is as a result of
16 police officers viewing those cameras and seeing
17 crime in action or about to take place and
18 dispatching officers to the site. Actually one of
19 them is in proximity to the representatives
20 office, because we wanted to make sure we had a
21 safe commercial corridor over there. And we've
22 ensured that we've diminished crime dramatically.

23 The City of Philadelphia currently
24 has a request for proposal out on the street where

0053

1 we anticipate placing, before the end of the year,
2 approximately 175 cameras across the City based on
3 comp stats provided by the police department in
4 high crime areas. And we anticipate that we will
5 be continuing phases as we move ahead.

6 REP. PEYTON: I need that program in
7 Frankford.

8 MR. CLARKE: We actually have some
9 locations targeted for those areas. And we think
10 that it is a strategy that the police can use. It
11 is not an attempt to replace police officers,
12 because no one can do that. They are some of the
13 finest civil service in the City Philadelphia and
14 in the county. We think it's a tool, but at the
15 end of the day, there's too many weapons. We all
16 have attended vigils, we've all attended prayer
17 services, and this violence continues. So we
18 really need to give us an opportunity to listen.

19 REP. PEYTON: And the rest of this
20 is more of a statement than a question. A couple
21 things stuck out to me in your testimony and that
22 was the statistics with Virginia. Is that they
23 were, you know, there was a 40 percent reduction
24 in the incidences of homicides in that one year.

0054

1 If that happened last year, we would have saved
2 162 lives. I think that's an astounding figure.
3 And I think that's something that us in the
4 general assembly really need to get out so that we
5 can see an immediate impact if we do pass these
6 laws. Because what we are trying to do, is we're
7 not trying to infringe upon anyone's right to own
8 a gun, we're just trying to take the incentive out
9 of gun traffic, and that's what's going on.
10 Because all the statistics show that there's
11 evidence of a black market. And if we don't act
12 to limit that black market, then we're kidding
13 ourselves.

14 Thank you again.

15 MR. CLARKE: I agree. Thank you.

16 REP. WILLIAMS: Once again, thank
17 you, Councilman Clark for all your work. Mr.
18 Chairman, I have legislation to introduce calling
19 for anyone who -- who -- anyone who is a convicted
20 felon gets caught carrying a gun in the streets of
21 Philadelphia will be charged with a mandatory -- I
22 know some of us don't like mandatory sentencing --
23 but a mandatory --

24 REP. MANDERINO: Let's talk about

0055

1 changing your sentencing there.

2 REP. WILLIAMS: Well, we can
3 negotiate on the mandatory, but what it will do
4 is, it will reduce those numbers, because the
5 recidivism of the folks who commit crimes and who
6 have already been inside the system, are the ones,
7 the five percent, are the ones that continue to
8 commit crimes. So that would be a way to get
9 those folks off the street and back where they
10 should go if they are out here shooting carrying
11 guns and killing people.

12 The commissioner said last year over
13 2,500 people was shot in Philadelphia, not
14 counting over 400 people who were murdered.
15 Unfortunately, in 1977 I was a shooting victim,
16 and it was because of a person with an illegal gun
17 gave another person a gun, and I got shot.

18 So there is a mechanism. There is a
19 way. We just have to use all the tools that we
20 can. And certainly we are glad that we have our
21 new chairman of the Judiciary Committee, who works
22 very hard trying to get these Bills through our
23 committee; because, as you said, there are a lot
24 of legislators from Western Pennsylvania who

0056

1 believe that if you say anything about gun
2 requirements or more gun certification or any kind
3 of data list, they are just against it.

4 Again, I was in Reading last week,
5 two weeks ago, and it was almost like I was going
6 with a sheriff. The sheriff was really like angry
7 with me because I talked about lost and stolen
8 guns. And, you know, they told me about the
9 Constitution Second Amendment you have a right to
10 bear arms. And I said to him, in those days they
11 was talking about picking up a shovel or broom, a
12 metal instrument. I don't want to use the name,
13 because I don't want to get confused with the
14 marks that Imus made. They had a metal instrument
15 they used. And I said to him the Constitution
16 doesn't say you have a right to have an Oozie.
17 Especially if you are going to be hunting deer,
18 you don't need an Oozie to hunt a deer. And one
19 of the gentlemen from the NRA said, for the
20 record, my wife owns an Oozie. Now, what person
21 in Pennsylvania needs an Oozie, unless you are
22 trying to start a war.

23 So, again, we thank you for your
24 testimony. And, certainly, we are going to be

0057

1 looking toward some of your legislation as a
2 compromise to what we do in Harrisburg. And,
3 hopefully, we can get some joint legislation.

4 MR. CLARKE: Thank you,
5 Representative. Thank you.

6 REP. CALTAGIRONE: We'll next hear
7 from Sergeant Jonathan Josie, Narcotics Strike
8 Force, Philadelphia Police Department and also the
9 Philadelphia Guardian Civil League.

10 SERGEANT JOSIE: Good morning,
11 Chairman and members of the Judiciary Committee.
12 As an African American male, I feel as though
13 we're an endangered species. And I say that,
14 number one, coming from two perspectives. I'm a
15 sergeant actually in the highway patrol, as well
16 as Vice President Membership Guardian Civic
17 League. I'm a 14-year veteran of the Philadelphia
18 Police Department. And, basically, I'm out there
19 every day on frontlines.

20 I actually am kind of shooting from
21 the top of my head because, number one, I'm so
22 passionate about this, it's a problem. And I want
23 to talk to you, Julius, when we get done, I really
24 do want to touch base with that young man, because

0058

1 I think he's profound young man.

2 My first thing is, we have a lot of
3 different issue that are coming into play as far
4 as this gun violence in the city is concerned. We
5 can sit here all day and place blame on a lot of
6 different things, but I think it all starts
7 initially at home. If you teach your children
8 certain responsibilities, they carry over into
9 their social life. And what I think is diminished
10 in our society and I think there are various
11 reasons why, whether an opportunity is just not
12 there, you have a lot of single parents, single
13 mothers raising boys and not being able to give
14 them what they need. I think it is a
15 responsibility as a black man on the African
16 American men in this city to take responsibility
17 for a young man. And that comes into play whether
18 it's uncles, grandfathers, cousins, take
19 responsibility for a young man in your community.

20 The thing about being a Philadelphia
21 police officer, it's kind of weird, because I've
22 got to walk the line between two things, being a
23 black man in an urban area as well as being a law
24 enforcement officer in an urban area.

1 I take things personal. My area
2 where I live is my area where I live. I think
3 once people start taking responsibility of their
4 particular areas and taking responsibility of
5 their block, having a sense of pride in their
6 apartments, in their block, in their children, it
7 will make a lot of difference.

8 One gun a month, I definitely think
9 that legislation is a must. Because a lot of
10 things -- what also creates a problem is if that
11 legislation -- with that legislation, they'll get
12 guns some other way. So what we need to do is we
13 need to put pressure on the judicial aspects of
14 it. No one hold these judges accountable. And,
15 Mr. Evans, I've mentioned this before. No one
16 holds these judges accountable. There's no reason
17 why my team goes out, locks up a guy on a Friday
18 with a gun, that Wednesday we're locking that same
19 guy up with another gun. It's not by
20 happenstance. It's no reason why a male with 36
21 priors should be out here on the street to commit
22 another crime. Because it's like anything, if you
23 don't discipline a child for sticking his hand in
24 a candy dish the first time, he's going to

0060

1 continue to do it.

2 I know it's hard and fast rules when
3 it comes to legislation and sentencing, but the
4 thing about it is, we have individuals out here
5 they're laying seeds to our city over and over and
6 over again. And it hurts me to my heart, because
7 I have to live here as well. And people may
8 think, you're a police officer, you have no
9 responsibility. I live in one area of the City.
10 I come to a different area every day to work.
11 It's not because I just don't have anything to do,
12 because I have a genuine care about what happens
13 in this city. My mother has to live in this city
14 and go back and forth in this city. I have a
15 child that has to go back and forth in this city.

16 And a lot of times people place
17 blame on the police department. The police
18 commissioner does the best job he can with the
19 tools given to him. But it's a responsibility of
20 members of the City as well as the police
21 department to make our city safer.

22 We need to create opportunities in
23 this city as well for these individuals. There is
24 no outlet for a lot of these young guys that are

0061

1 out here running these streets. As a law
2 enforcement officer we come up with a lot of
3 resistance. We pull up on these corners and we
4 tell these guys, we're not telling them to get off
5 this corner just because we have nothing better to
6 do, because so many times -- and I want to give
7 you a scenario, back in '95 I was a police officer
8 in the 16th District. My partner and I worked the
9 wagon and we worked with another team on another
10 district. And we cleared our corners. On a
11 particular date we cleared one corner one day.
12 The next day we were all off. That following day
13 males on that corner, three of them were murdered.
14 That is a direct reflection not cooperating with
15 us. We don't want you to get off these corners
16 just because we don't have nothing to do. We
17 don't want to see you as a chalk outline with the
18 little plaque card from the Crime Scene Unit
19 marking were your shell casings are.

20 We need to talk to our children. We
21 need to create opportunity for individuals to --
22 of employment. We need to create opportunities
23 for our children. These individuals out here that
24 are committing these crimes don't have anything

0062

1 better to do than stand on corners. That's what
2 we need to do.

3 Another thing -- and I don't want to
4 get long-winded here -- straw purchasers. I'm
5 going to give you a scenario of how fast a gun can
6 go from legal to illegal. I was talking to a
7 friend of mine who works for ATF. They were doing
8 spot checking in a particular gun store. They go
9 into in a spot one afternoon, female comes in with
10 a male. She purchases a gun. They thought
11 something was fishy with the way the transaction
12 went down. The owner of the store told her if
13 everything as you put on this paperwork is not
14 accurate, you will go to jail. She didn't believe
15 him. By 7:00 p.m. that evening ATF wen to her
16 house and knocked on her door and asked her where
17 her gun was. She couldn't tell him anything. She
18 purchased that gun, turned it over to the male
19 that she was in the store with who was a convicted
20 felon. So that's a period of five to six hours
21 that that gun went from legal to illegal.

22 It's a must that these straw
23 purchasers, which they are actually vigorously
24 prosecuted, but we need to do something in our

0063

1 city, and we need to be able to do it and enact
2 our own gun laws in the city of Philadelphia.

3 Thank you.

4 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you. Thank
5 you for the job of serving the community and
6 putting that badge on. I appreciate that.

7 Trish Odoms, Executive Director,
8 Columbia North YMCA.

9 MS. ODOMS: Goods morning, Mr.
10 Chairman, and members of the House Judiciary
11 Committee. My name is Trish Odoms. I'm the
12 executive director at the Columbia North YMCA
13 right here in North Philadelphia.

14 I want to thank you for the
15 opportunity to testify today, and definitely give
16 a special thanks to Representative Williams, he's
17 always very supportive of programs like the Y and
18 things that really do things to address violence
19 in North Philadelphia.

20 I also want to express our support
21 of House Bill 22 that was introduced by
22 Representative John Meyers. As you know, in
23 addition to limiting the purchase of firearms to
24 one per month, this Bill establishes a violence

0064

1 prevention fund for the purposes of education and
2 activities designed to prevent violence,
3 particularly among youths.

4 Some quick facts on the Y. On an
5 annual basis we serve 2,000 adults and children in
6 a variety of programs, aerobics, fitness, day
7 camp, swimming, and after school. 70 percent of
8 the families we serve receive either some type of
9 state subsidy or private scholarship dollars
10 raised by the community, Y staff, and volunteers
11 to help them participate in positive activity.

12 We also have a number of programs
13 that address youth violence. And I'm going to
14 talk to you about that today. I'm going to tell
15 you about the story of two young men growing up in
16 North Philadelphia. Their names are Bertram
17 Lawson and Jevonne McCrerry.

18 Bertram was a smart kid. He came
19 from a home with two parents, dressed well, and
20 got good grades. But to his peers, he wasn't
21 cool, he wasn't tough, he had no street
22 credibility. All of this meant he had no respect.
23 Bertram was, in fact, an outside in his own North
24 Philadelphia community. And, often, when you have

0065

1 no street credibility, you become a target. Give
2 you a simple example from Virgil's past. When he
3 was eight an older boy stole his hat on the
4 playground. That simple act would come to have a
5 larger meaning in Virgil's life as his parents
6 insisted he stand up for himself and get his hat
7 back through non-violent means. I'll say it
8 again, through non-violent means. He got his hat
9 back and learned early in life how to resolve
10 conflict and command respect without falling into
11 the traps of gangs, drugs, and violence.

12 Now, I'll tell you about Jevonne.
13 He grew up in North Philadelphia, too, but his
14 parents weren't around, they sold drugs. He went
15 days without eating. He did poorly in school.
16 And he wore clothing that he had long outgrown.
17 Unlike Bertram, Jevonne had street credibility, he
18 had respect. In fact, he often inspired fear in
19 others, for he learned early in life to get
20 respect you often had to take it by force. He
21 often got into fights. And he soon found himself
22 on the path to probation and heading for a
23 permanent stay at juvenile hall.

24 These two men, both of whom were

0066

1 raised in North Philadelphia, having their own
2 ideas about what respect means and how to get it,
3 soon found their paths intercepting after coming
4 to North YMCA. When Jevonne coming to the Y got
5 into a physical altercation with another boy.
6 Bertram Lawson, who now is a program director at
7 the Y intervened and immediately began counseling
8 Jevonne. Because he had been where Jevonne was.

9 That day our YMCA Team Empowerment
10 League was formed for the sole purpose of teaching
11 teens how to gain respect without resorting to
12 violent means. Through this league we partnered
13 with a local police district, Sneaker Villa, The
14 Guardian Angels, and the Calvary Church. We offer
15 200 boys and girls the opportunity to gain
16 valuable life skills through sports.

17 And let me just say this, rather
18 than having them on a court just learning about
19 basketball, prior to each game we added another
20 component where they are required to participate
21 in life skill classes on topics ranging from
22 dangers of guns, anger and management, resume
23 writing, sexual health issues, job skills, and
24 more.

1 Children participating in the league
2 are held to strict standards of behavior, and they
3 learn out to handle disagreements without
4 resorting to violence. Today, through his
5 participation in the league, Jevonne has charted a
6 new course for his life. He is now on his
7 school's basketball team. He earns good grades.
8 And he's considering college, a trade school to be
9 specific. Jevonne also volunteers to help at the
10 Y. He's now connected and giving back by helping
11 to raise scholarship dollars to help kids, just
12 like him, have an opportunity to find a safe haven
13 in the Y's program. He often intervenes when he
14 sees a younger child having behavioral problems,
15 because he, like his mentor Bertram, has been
16 there faced with the opportunity to either make a
17 positive choice or negative one. Thanks to
18 programs like the Y and Bertram's intervention, he
19 knows just what to say to younger kids.

20 It is our belief that programs such
21 as ours are a crucial component in any policy
22 efforts to address youth and gun violence.
23 Initiatives that provide at-risk young kids with
24 alternatives to engage in violence. Let me say

0068

1 that again, alternatives. It's not enough for us
2 to simply tell a young person put the guns down,
3 don't get into fights. Put the guns down and do
4 what? They need to have some type of alternatives
5 to getting into trouble.

6 Next thing, initiatives that provide
7 mentors, mentors to help guide them. People need
8 intervention in their lives. Unfortunately gone
9 is the time when I was raised where you not only
10 had your parents there to guide you, but you had a
11 whole community. It doesn't matter that my mom
12 was at work. If I got in trouble, Ms. Johnson
13 down the street was going to pull me back in line.
14 You don't have that today. You need mentors. It
15 takes more than the police department. It takes
16 more than politicians. It takes all of us. It
17 takes that village concept to guide these young
18 people and get them on the right track.

19 And, lastly, the initiatives that
20 provide young people with the knowledge that they
21 have the power to make positive choices about
22 their future, that they do have the power. That
23 there is a different reality than what they are
24 currently living. That's important that

0069

1 knowledge. As such, we would like to reiterate
2 our support for youth violence funding and House
3 Bill 22.

4 Again, I want to thank you for the
5 opportunity to come out and speak to you today.

6 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you.

7 Next we'll hear from District
8 Attorney Lynne Abraham. There she is.

9 REP. WILLIAMS: Good morning.

10 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Good morning.

11 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: Good
12 morning. I'm waiting for my cue.

13 REP. WILLIAMS: Well, first of all,
14 let me just thank you again, District Attorney
15 Lynne Abraham, for all the work you have been
16 doing over the years, and how you continuously
17 support the community efforts. And you've been
18 doing a great job. And we are here today with the
19 Judiciary Committee and Chairman Caltagirone to
20 get some information and insight from the
21 community as well as the political and law
22 enforcement on ideas and suggestions on
23 legislation and laws that we make and implement.

24 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: Well,

0070

1 first of all, I thank the Committee for holding
2 these hearings. I think having the mountain
3 coming to Mohammed, so to speak, is a good thing.
4 Because so many people have no idea what happens
5 in Harrisburg. So many people don't turn on PCN.
6 I think it's the most fascinating thing to see how
7 our government works and the fact that members of
8 this committee have come to the community to see
9 how governments really works and to hear the
10 community is extremely important.

11 Before I give you some general
12 thoughts, I wanted you to know that I sometimes
13 despair of what I think of the people whom I deal
14 on a daily basis and how lost they are. And it
15 takes something to take me away from what I do
16 every day to get me to appreciate how many
17 wonderful children there are in Philadelphia.
18 Just before I came here, as I mentioned to you at
19 the sheriff's prayer breakfast this morning, I had
20 to go to the Hackett Elementary School. I go to
21 many elementary schools all throughout the year,
22 and I read to little children. And many of these
23 children, if not most of these children, are
24 really wonderful kids, they are thirsting for

0071

1 knowledge. They want to learn.

2 And today I did a book on
3 immigration, and luckily the teacher had a world
4 map. And I was showing -- I was reading the book
5 and pointing on the map to the places that the
6 children were learning about from where our
7 country comes. And these kids loved to hear
8 people read, but they want to relate it to
9 something. And when we talked about immigration,
10 geography, history, and the wonderful country that
11 we have, these children were attentive and bright
12 and interested as ever.

13 So the first thing is, let's not
14 despair that our entire youth is going to hell in
15 a hen basket, it isn't. However, there are
16 significant numbers of children who are at risk.
17 And here's sort of where I come down on this
18 issue.

19 From 0 to 10, the criminal justice
20 system has nothing to do with children, it's
21 beyond our jurisdiction. Because the law says
22 that conclusively a child under 10 is incapable of
23 forming criminal intent that the law recognizes.
24 So we don't even see a child, and maybe that's

0072

1 just as well, I'm not saying that's a bad thing or
2 a good thing, maybe it's just as well, until a
3 child is past his or her 10th birthday. That
4 means that from the moment of conception until 10,
5 it's entirely up to the parents, the community,
6 the churches, and others to put these children on
7 a good moral path. And it is shocking how many
8 children don't have fundamental needs. And while
9 some things are good, some things are bad, I think
10 a program that feeds hungry children is good, but
11 I think it's bad that parents say, well, I don't
12 have to feed him, he going to go to school to
13 feed. When you get up in the morning your mom,
14 your dad, whoever is taking care of you, first
15 thing is you get washed, that's important,
16 personal cleanliness. Your breakfast is down on
17 the table. It was only a bowl of cereal and milk
18 and a glass of juice for me when I was a kid, but
19 that's all I needed, what else do the kids need,
20 maybe a banana, and a peanut butter and jelly
21 sandwich for lunch, and I was off to school. But
22 I had people who loved me, who cared for me, who
23 nurtured me. And, essentially, what happens to
24 the children that we see in the criminal justice

0073

1 system is there is nobody there to love them,
2 nobody there to watch them, nobody to give them a
3 moral compass. And by seeing what's happening in
4 the community, they learn lessons which are not
5 necessarily good lessons, and they become very
6 hard. They become calculating. And they become
7 devious. And they become violent.

8 So we have a situation where we see
9 roughly 10,000 young people a year who commit the
10 most unspeakable crimes of violence, some things
11 that you don't even think a 12, a 13 or a 14 year
12 old is capable of doing, but they do. They rape.
13 They steal. Kill. Rob. I hear the Amens behind
14 me. And they terrorize. Here's the thing, the
15 whole pancake has been flipped over. The adults
16 don't have the moral suasion in the community,
17 it's the little thugs and punks, frequently backed
18 up by their parent or guardian who holds sway over
19 the community. So the neighborhood is held
20 captive by a group of young people and some older
21 heads, too, not the 11 and 13 year olds, but the
22 19 and 20 year olds. And there are tons of
23 problems.

24 And we see it in our homicide

0074

1 figures. Just think, that nationally African
2 Americans, mostly black men, have a murder rate
3 three times the national average or, roughly, 19
4 per hundred thousand of population, where is the
5 rest of the population, 5 per one hundred thousand
6 is the national homicide rate. Pennsylvania has
7 the dubious distinction of having the highest
8 black homicide rate in the country, roughly, 29.5
9 per hundred thousand black people, mostly young
10 black men between the ages of 14, 15 and 34.

11 And in Philadelphia, as you probably
12 know already, and have probably heard, 74,000
13 people were arrested last year and about a \$140
14 million worth of drugs confiscated, and about
15 6,000 guns, if that doesn't tell you what's
16 running the crime wave in Philadelphia, it's guns
17 and drugs and people who are really not frightened
18 of the criminal justice system.

19 And I am fortunate to have had the
20 opportunity to work with State Representative
21 Dwight Evans and you, Representative Caltagirone,
22 Representative Manderino, and everybody else on
23 the Committee. And we have really done fabulous
24 things, but more needs to be done. And the things

0075

1 that need to be done are important. I want --
2 before I sort of let myself open to any questions
3 that the Committee has, we were -- we had two
4 great gifts from the legislature in addition to
5 all the laws we have lobbied for over the years to
6 handle such issues, such as domestic abuse, sexual
7 assault, drug dealing, and so forth. But two
8 great things happened with the legislature; first
9 the Blueprint For Better Philadelphia,
10 Representative Evans and others we all sat
11 together and cobbled together this ten point
12 program. A couple of Bills need to be passed on
13 that program, but we're really moving ahead. The
14 gun court is doing phenomenally well. We have
15 handled, as part of the Blueprint, from 2005 we
16 had 510 cases and 2006 we had 683 cases. We
17 wouldn't be able to do that if the Blueprint
18 hadn't provided funding for that. That's a
19 special court for offenders that carry guns but
20 don't use them. And there are other programs that
21 Blue Print funds, such as the Youth Violence
22 Reduction Partnership. But it don't work unless
23 if it's not city wide. And I have deep respect
24 for the legislature in coming to our aid, but I

0076

1 have to say the city needs to put its dollars
2 where it's needed the most.

3 65 percent of the people polled say
4 that they believe that Philadelphia is going in
5 the wrong direction vis-à-vis crime. And, you
6 know, we generate a lot of revenue. And the next
7 mayor is going to have to start thinking about
8 priorities. Where are we going to put the huge
9 numbers of dollars that we take in.

10 The second gift that we received,
11 and this is, I think, going to be as potent a
12 weapon as, perhaps, we've ever had. We received
13 -- when I say, "we", I mean the Attorney General
14 received money, \$5 million, from the legislature
15 under the auspices of State Representative Evans
16 and spearheaded by State Senator Vincent Fumo and
17 others. And that \$5 million is going towards an
18 aspect of the law that's already in existence
19 going after straw purchasers.

20 I am going to say something that
21 some of the people in this room may know about,
22 they certainly know a lot, they know certainly
23 more than I know, because they live in it every
24 day, but when we got this money for straw

0077

1 purchasing which is already in the law, but it was
2 extremely difficult to mount a campaign, because
3 we didn't have the money for it. And to tell the
4 truth, judges weren't terribly excited about it.
5 And it's hard to get our judges to do the right
6 thing sometimes; however, this money we could
7 divert resources to going after those people who
8 go into gun stores and buy guns for people who have
9 criminal records. And they can buy them because
10 they know that the person has a criminal record
11 but they also know that they don't.

12 And when somebody, a parent, a
13 girlfriend, brother, uncle, father, grandfather,
14 goes into a store and buys a gun for somebody he
15 or she knows cannot lawfully own, possess,
16 operate, use, carry a gun that is called a straw
17 purchase. In the first three months that this
18 program has been in existence we've already
19 arrested 14 people. We have confiscated 51 guns,
20 including two AK-47's and a whole lot of fire
21 power 357s, Glocks, 44s. I mean, you know, we had
22 one cheapo gun, we had a Taurus, which is a 35
23 Buck. It's not a car, it's a gun. It's made out
24 in California. They used to be called Saturday

0078

1 Night Special, they are like forty, fifty bucks.
2 But most people are not interested in the cheapo
3 guns, they were interested in the \$400 and \$500
4 guns.

5 And interestingly enough, 7 of the
6 14 we arrested were women who were buying guns for
7 their boyfriends who were drug dealers. And in
8 one case one women bought guns for her drug
9 supplier, because she needed drugs and he needed a
10 gun. And in one of the cases one of the guns was
11 confiscated was given to a person who later wound
12 up being murdered on the street, a drug dealer.
13 And all of these people are charged with making
14 false statements on federal firearms form. They
15 are charged with making -- some of them try to out
16 slick us by thinking, oh, let's see, my boyfriend
17 is not allowed to have a gun. He's a convicted
18 felon, he deals drugs sometimes. He has a bad
19 temper. People are after him. I better report
20 this gun stolen, so they think they can out slick
21 us by reporting the guns stolen. No, not
22 happening. Because we arrested several people who
23 reported their guns as stolen. Unfortunately for
24 some of them, some of the guns, at least one that

0079

1 I can think of right off the top of my head, was
2 found by the police three months before the
3 burglary was to supposed to have happened. We say
4 now, ma'am, you reported your gun stolen. When
5 exactly was this burglary? Oh, June. June of
6 2006? Yes. What happened? Well, some guy came
7 into my house, I don't know, da, da, da, da. The
8 gun was gone. I reported it stolen as soon as I
9 found. This happened just last week, right? Just
10 last week. Well, can you tell us how come we've
11 had this gun in our hands, because we found it at
12 a drug den? How did we get this gun four months
13 before you reported it stolen? Oh, oops.

14 So this task force, we think,
15 answers two critics. The one is the NRA, which
16 you know in the legislature always complains about
17 more guns laws. They say why don't you enforce
18 the laws you already have. And the second is --
19 the other problem besides answering the critics is
20 that we showed you the legislature, and the public
21 whom we served that you and we work closer
22 together, and that we can work mutually to
23 everybody's satisfaction.

24 And, frankly, the gun lobbyist don't

0080

1 have anything to worry about. This state, as you
2 know, is a rural state filled with guns but except
3 for Philadelphia, and a few other places, nobody
4 is using human beings as their target of
5 opportunity.

6 So I believe that we can do lots
7 more things with the help of the legislature. And
8 I'm here to thank the legislature for the money
9 they have given us, for the programs they have
10 come to us and asked us to partner with, and the
11 opportunity to tell the community that this
12 legislature and these representatives who are here
13 before you, they work.

14 Now, you may not know Representative
15 Caltagirone, but I know them, he's a working dude.
16 He's not going to Harrisburg to collect his dues.
17 He's working. I've worked with Representative
18 Caltagirone for the better part of 16 years. But
19 the legislators at the table from the Philadelphia
20 area whom this city does know, they need to know
21 right from my lips that this is a legislation that
22 works and cares about people, and works really
23 very hard to make it better for the citizens of
24 Philadelphia.

1 Here's the bottom line for me,
2 irreducible minimum, no crime can be committed in
3 the City of Philadelphia without somebody knowing
4 about it. Impossible. There are 1.4 million
5 people, depending on how many people Phoenix says
6 we have. We may be the sixth largest city. There
7 were 1.4 plus million people in the city and
8 probably a million of them are people out at the
9 street at any given moment. They are either
10 sitting out there, driving out there, leaning out
11 their windows, looking through the blinds, peeping
12 through the curtains, or something. And when a
13 crime occurs, everybody knows about it.

14 What really iced the cake for me
15 last Sunday in the Philadelphia Inquirer was a
16 story about a scene I believe it was Temple
17 University emergency room where I believe Dr.
18 Goodman may have come to you earlier this week and
19 testified; but maybe what she didn't say was what
20 the reporter reported. I'm assuming because it
21 was in quotes it was accurate. A doctor was
22 feverishly trying to save a young man's life who
23 had been shot multiple times, which is the usual
24 course in Philadelphia, while his younger brother

0082

1 and mother were out of the operating room. And a
2 police officer came in and started to tell the cop
3 who it was who shot his brother when his mother
4 said -- I won't use the curse words that she used,
5 but she said, you don't tell him anything, you
6 don't tell the police, we will take care of this
7 ourselves.

8 Now, here's what's going to happen.
9 First of all, I have appreciation and
10 understanding that not all police officers are
11 trusted by the civilians. I'm not going to argue
12 that point, it's too big of a problem, we can talk
13 about that some other time, but here's what that
14 woman is saying to her son: It's okay if X and Y
15 shoot it out on the street. If X gets killed, we
16 will go out and kill Y's people. If Y gets
17 killed, we'll go out and kill X people. This idea
18 that don't talk, don't testify, don't help, we
19 will take care of this ourselves, further plunges
20 the community down the drain. It makes everybody
21 else's life endangered including that poor sole
22 who was getting dressed to go to work last week,
23 and those two groups out on 59th & Larchwood, or
24 wherever it was, were fighting it out, and that

0083

1 poor man was getting ready to go to work was
2 killed, doing nothing. Because these people think
3 they can shoot each other on the streets. And you
4 know what, here's the saddest part, as with the
5 woman in the emergency room, the police are still
6 looking for witnesses to tell them, what was going
7 on here?

8 So I don't care how much money you
9 pour at the problem, and I don't care anything
10 else you do, unless the voice of the community
11 say, you know, we are had up with it. It used to
12 be up to here -- I'm indicating on my chest. And
13 then it used to be up to here -- I'm indicating on
14 my throat. And then it used to be up to here --
15 I'm indicating, for the record, at my chin. And
16 now it's right up at the nose. So, you know, the
17 police can't do it, and I can't do it, and you
18 can't do it, it's the voice of the community.
19 There is more power in this room than in any
20 elected official's office or body. It's they who
21 decide how much crime they will tolerate. It's up
22 to them not up to you, and it not up to me. I can
23 only go with witnesses. But when I see people
24 coming on the witness stand lying about what

0084

1 happened, saying I never said it I never saw it.
2 Did I say he shot my brother, never said it, lied,
3 police lied. Then what do you expect to happen on
4 the streets of Philadelphia. So we need to get
5 back to what that young lady before me was talking
6 about, the idea of Mrs. Johnson -- in my
7 neighborhood it was Ms. Derickson, and Mrs. Bush,
8 and Mrs. Raone, boy, you wouldn't move anyplace
9 without them knowing about it, just on my block.
10 And, remember, at 59th and Addison where I lived,
11 you couldn't even cross the street without
12 somebody watching you, even though nobody had a
13 car, nobody had a car. That's the way it was.

14 So we are a grown-up city. We are
15 worthy of more. We have to do better in making
16 sure that nobody subscribes to the notion of don't
17 snitch, don't tell; don't tell anybody, we will
18 take care of this ourselves. It's horribly
19 destructive, and the carnage will go on.

20 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you
21 District Attorney.

22 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: Thank
23 you.

24 REP. CALTAGIRONE: I appreciate it.

0085

1 We have always had a very good working
2 relationship over all these year.

3 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: In deed
4 we have.

5 REP. CALTAGIRONE: God knows, we're
6 going to try to get a handle on this problem. But
7 you're absolutely right, all the legislation in
8 the world, all the money in the world, it's people
9 -- and people got to learn how to be respectful of
10 one another, love one another, and do the right
11 things.

12 Are there any questions?

13 REP. PEYTON: Yes.

14 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Representative
15 Peyton.

16 REP. PEYTON: Thank you for your
17 testimony, District Attorney.

18 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: My
19 pleasure.

20 REP. PEYTON: Prior to you a couple
21 of testifiers ago there was a young man by the
22 name of Sergeant Josie who is a police -- is a
23 sergeant in the Philadelphia Police Departments,
24 he spoke about a problem that they have is they

0086

1 lock someone up on a Friday, and they are back out
2 on a Wednesday, and they're locking them up again.

3 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: That
4 late? Usually they are out by Monday.

5 REP. PEYTON: And they're locking
6 them up again later in the week. What can we do
7 to stop that trend. What can we do as a
8 legislature to stop that trend?

9 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM:
10 Representative, here's the reality -- and these
11 folks know, because I've been in this community
12 for so many years, I really speak the whole
13 unvarnished truth -- we had a prison called
14 Holmesburg Prison it was built for 3,500, they had
15 5,000. We built a new prison, it was built for
16 5,000, we have 8,900 in it. Okay.

17 As I said, last year the police
18 arrested 74,000 people. Of that 74,000; 2,500
19 people have more than 25 arrests each. People are
20 not coming to court, prisons are overcrowded. So
21 let's say the police arrest me on Friday, and
22 let's assume my paperwork is processed relatively
23 promptly and I'm out on Monday. The reason I'm
24 not going to prison or jail, waiting trial; is

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1 that, first of all, every person is entitled to
2 bail. And what some of these folks don't know,
3 perhaps, is that even murder cases are entitled to
4 bail unless it's capital murder case, that is,
5 where the death penalty may be involved or unless
6 the judge feels that no condition of bail or
7 requirements of my being allowed to let go will
8 assure the community will be safe from me. Aside
9 from that, everybody gets out on bail if they can
10 make the money.

11 So because of the prison
12 overcrowding, because people will find money to
13 let people get bailed out of custody, because we
14 have a right to be bailed, because we have a
15 presumption of innocence, there is not a whole lot
16 we can do at the present moment. Now, here's some
17 of the things we can do, if the City and/or the
18 legislature wanted to invest in more monitoring
19 and more pre-trial probation officers, one of
20 things the City can do -- and this is an expensive
21 proposition -- is more electronic home monitoring.

22 Now, here's what it does and here's
23 what it doesn't do. If I'm a drug dealer -- and
24 I'm going to use myself as an example -- let's say

0088

1 I'm a drug dealer, and I'm arrested for drug
2 dealing, and I have a long record for drug
3 dealing, I still have a presumption of innocence.
4 They put me electronic home monitoring, for
5 whatever reason, the jail is full, I made bail,
6 whatever, it doesn't stop me from drug dealing.
7 All it stops me from doing is going out of the
8 area that the judge set as my geographical limit.
9 All right. And if I'm allowed to go to work
10 between, let's say, 9:00 and 5:00, I can be doing
11 drug dealing. So electronic home monitoring can
12 be a snare and a delusion, don't hope it's going
13 to promise more than it can deliver.

14 The other thing, and I think this is
15 a better way of going, is that in our gun court
16 these people have not used a gun but have been
17 found in illegal possession of guns. In other
18 words, they didn't get a license, they have it,
19 they're in illegal possession, it's not stolen,
20 it's came to them, I don't know, through whatever,
21 yeah, osmosis, found on a lot, you know. I don't
22 know, I've been across a million lots in
23 Philadelphia, I have not found a gun here once on
24 a lot, but maybe I'm in the wrong lots. But,

0089

1 anyway, the person has not used a gun and is not a
2 violent offender. But from the moment they are
3 arrested, they have a pre-trial probation
4 assessment to find out what are their issues and
5 problems. It doesn't interfere with their
6 presumption of innocence, but they get job
7 interviews, maybe have a health interview, sort of
8 like a community court. You have to be careful
9 that you don't overstep a person's presumption of
10 innocence, but if you had closer pre-trial
11 monitoring, it certainly would be a help. It's
12 not the answer, it's only a couple of things that
13 you might want to think about.

14 REP. PEYTON: Thank you very much.

15 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: Thank
16 you.

17 REP. PEYTON: And I would put this
18 out to the audience that everybody embrace and
19 promote the Step Up Speak Up Campaign, because, I
20 mean, there is never a crime that no one doesn't
21 see. And we have to as a community step up and
22 report those things, if we want them to stop
23 happening. So everybody take that message back to
24 your individual communities.

0090

1 Thank you.

2 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Representative

3 Manderino.

4 REP. MANDERINO: Thank you. One
5 comment and then kind of one question or request.

6 First I just want to highlight again
7 the point that you made about the responsibility
8 of the community, and thank you for constantly
9 beating that drum. When folks call my office and
10 they complain about young people hanging on the
11 corner and the police won't do anything, and I say
12 them to them, well, who are they? I don't know.
13 Well, are they your neighbors? I don't know.
14 Well, do you know who they belong to? I don't
15 know. We are all culpable when we do that, too.
16 It's not just I saw the murder happen, and I'm
17 afraid to say something. It's I didn't bother to
18 care whether the kids that I see on my own street
19 belong on my own street and belong to folks. And
20 just like the district attorney said, I couldn't
21 do anything in my neighborhood, too, because by
22 the time I got home my mom already knew, because
23 people knew who I belonged to, and they called my
24 mom and told when I was out of line. And we have

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1 have advocated responsibility for ourselves in our
2 community at that very early stage. You know,
3 forget when the kids are already doing the crime,
4 you know, when they are disrupting the neighbors
5 or throwing stones at old Mrs. Jones' window,
6 that's the time that we need to take
7 responsibility.

8 So I thank you for, I think,
9 maybe -- that's maybe a safer message that we can
10 give to our community that that's part of stepping
11 up and being a community member too. So I thank
12 you for preaching that message.

13 I guess my question and concern is,
14 and before you came Representative Williams talked
15 about a proposal he has for new mandatories that
16 have to do with gun crimes, and I'll admit that I
17 rolled by my eyes. And it's very frustrating for
18 me, because we know this is the multifaceted
19 problem. I'm not against being tough on
20 criminals. I'm not against being tough on violent
21 crime. But when you are sitting in the position
22 where we are trying to put resources to so many
23 problems, and I know that every time I build a new
24 jail, I can't build a new school, it's

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1 frustrating, because I want to put the money in
2 the schools. And when I have our wardens both at
3 our state and county levels constantly when they
4 come before us telling us that we have a
5 significant percentage of folks in our prisons who
6 are not non-violent offenders, so we can't get the
7 violent ones in there and keep them in there.
8 It's very frustrating to me.

9 I guess my question or my -- my of
10 wanting to work together this term -- I mean,
11 Jewell -- oh, Jewell isn't here right now. I
12 mean, I'll trade him his mandatory on guns for
13 every two mandatories for non-violent crimes we
14 get off the books, so that we can right side where
15 we are. But I really -- I really would like some
16 help to figure out how we can readjust the
17 resources that we are spending to get to the right
18 places. Because, I'll be very honest, I don't
19 want to spend anymore money building jails, I want
20 to spend that money educating kids. And let's
21 figure out a way we can do that together.

22 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: Well,
23 here's the problem, as I see it. If you do not
24 have an appropriate corrections program, whether

0093

1 it's in custody or out of custody, you're not
2 going to be able to have a school.

3 Just a few weeks ago -- and,
4 remember, there are 230,000 kids in the school, so
5 I'm not talking about every child in every
6 school -- but we have a significant number of
7 children in school who are bullies starting at age
8 5 and 6 and 7, truant, they are ruining their
9 neighborhoods. And when you talk to me about
10 non-violent offenses, I don't know the warden's
11 definition, but I bet I could go toe to toe with
12 the warden.

13 If somebody tells me they are a drug
14 dealer, don't tell me that's a non-violent
15 offense. Because when you see a drug dealer, you
16 see guns. There is nobody dealing drugs without
17 guns. Nobody. That's how you get the best price.
18 That's how you make sure people pay. That's how
19 you maintain your turf. And that's how you
20 maintain your stature.

21 There are significant issues in this
22 country about how many people want drugs and why.
23 And we have a significant population of adults.
24 You turn on the television today, I don't care

0094

1 what you are watching, what channel you are
2 watching, all you are watching is ads for big
3 Pharma pushing more drugs on adults. And what
4 happens is we became a drug induced adult
5 population who kids steal from kids and parents
6 and grandparents to sell or take out on the
7 street. So I mean drugs are a huge problem.

8 REP. MANDERINO: Do we decriminalize
9 it --

10 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: No.

11 REP. MANDERINO: -- so that we take
12 the profit out of it, so that we take --

13 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: Oh, no,
14 no, no.

15 REP. MANDERINO: -- the crime out of
16 it, so that we take the guns out of it.

17 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: No. I
18 think thinking that we by decriminalizing drugs
19 are going to have Utopia is such a false
20 assumption, because I'll tell you what, that just
21 leaves me free to undercut. Let's say you're
22 allowed to dispense drugs to drug dealers for
23 whatever price there is. I'm going sell it to him
24 for less. I'm going to go in competition with

0095

1 you. I guarantee you, I can do better business
2 than you can, Ms. Pharma, because I'm going to --
3 I'm not going to big Pharma, I'm going to --

4 REP. MANDERINO: But big Pharma is
5 already doing them out there at the wealthy
6 suburbs, and their people -- and they are not
7 locked up in prisons like ours are.

8 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: Here's
9 the difference -- and I don't want to compare
10 Philadelphia to the suburbs, because I don't live
11 in those suburbs, I don't want to live in those
12 suburbs, I want to live right where I am, so I
13 have to grapple with the problems I have. I can't
14 worry about other communities. I want to worry
15 about us. We are not having people from the
16 suburbs come crushing into Philadelphia robbing
17 these folks behind me or raping their children or
18 disrupting their schools or shooting up their
19 neighborhood, no, these are all homegrown.

20 I don't -- I know the communities
21 outside Philadelphia have their problems, but I
22 want to concentrate on mine. But the real issue
23 is, I can work with prisons, but here's what's
24 happening in this country, this year, in spite of

0096

1 what everybody says, around 600,000 prisoners,
2 600,000 prisoners, will be coming back onto the
3 streets. Many of them cannot read. They can't
4 add up a column of numbers. They have no job
5 skills. When I see people saying, oh, we ought to
6 let these prisoners go and get them a job. No
7 disrespect, doing what? What kind of job is there
8 for an illiterate, uneducated former prisoner who
9 robs and shoots and kills. I don't think it's
10 happening. I don't gauge in magical thinking.

11 REP. MANDERINO: That's the problem
12 that happened at age 10 when you talked about
13 before the criminal justice system.

14 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: Well, we
15 have -- we should have -- and here's something you
16 may want to think about -- when I say you, I say
17 the legislature. If parents can't -- and I don't
18 want a parent that comes to me at 10, 11, 12 and
19 says, I can't handle my kid, you fix him. Ma'am,
20 I can't fix your child. You brought him into the
21 world for whatever reasons, he's your
22 responsibility, so you can't fob off my child on
23 somebody else. But there -- if there were a
24 really good comprehensive way of intervening in

0097

1 the lives of, first, pregnant girls, which some
2 schools have wonderful programs. And then around
3 perinatally or prenatally, then postnatal care,
4 how to take care of this child, how not to shake
5 him when the kids starts to cry, don't smack him
6 or beat him or shake him. How to love or nurture.
7 If we had a continuum of care from preconception
8 to conception, if it happens, and then care
9 afterwards; by the time that child is ten, we
10 don't have a problem. That child learns all that
11 bad behavior, how to get over on mom, how to steal
12 and get away with it, how to cut class, how to be
13 bad and a bully, from before the child is born
14 until 10. By the time he becomes 10, if this kid
15 can't be turned around in the next two or
16 three years by intensive intervention,
17 psychotherapy, and all the other modalities, we
18 have, and there aren't very many in the criminal
19 side, but in the civil side, there may be more,
20 that child may, may very well be lost.

21 REP. MANDERINO: And I appreciate
22 very much where you are coming from. I guess what
23 I would say and why this is so complex is because
24 this year for every new one prison bed we decide

0098

1 at the state level to spend more resources on,
2 that's the amount of money that we don't spend on
3 for ten kids in our home parenting program, for
4 five kids in our elementary education program, for
5 eight people in our job training programs, and so
6 somewhere we have to figure out how we allocate
7 resources in a way that keeps us safe, but also
8 allows us to stop the problem before it starts.

9 And that is the huge frustration
10 that I have with my colleagues and with my
11 constituents who think that the first answer is
12 lock them up and throw away the key. And I don't
13 know any other way to not have that be the first
14 answer, then to always feel like I'm the person
15 standing there saying, "just say no to more
16 mandatories", or something like that. Because I
17 don't know how else to get folks to focus the
18 resources on the front end. Because I know that
19 every time I say "yes" to a new mandatory, I have
20 already committed the money on the front end that
21 cost me \$30,000 a year -- somebody who is beyond
22 saving now, as compared to \$3,000 on the front end
23 of somebody that doesn't have to go down that
24 path.

0099

1 It's such a vicious cycle, but I
2 guess what I'm saying is I often fell like I'm at
3 combat with what law enforcement and prosecutors
4 say they want, and it's not because of bad will of
5 what you are doing, it's because of such a sense
6 of injustice about how we have allocated resources
7 and how we are losing all these folks on the front
8 end.

9 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: You
10 know, it's really -- let me just say, it's not
11 really what prosecutors want, it's the public that
12 wants this. You know, it's the public that wants
13 this. When somebody comes and shoots through your
14 window and takes your son away, what else is a
15 person supposed to say? Kiss him and love him and
16 say, oh, his mother didn't treat him nice when he
17 was a kid? Most of the people in this room -- and
18 I'm not excluding the members of any of these
19 tables who are speakers or myself -- many of us in
20 one way or another have had tough lives. We may
21 have grown up with one parent. We may have grown
22 up poor, hungry. We didn't have anything. Most
23 of us got through all of that and didn't use that
24 as a copout for criminal behavior. Right?

0100

1 REP. MANDERINO: And the same, most
2 of us would also say why aren't we making sure
3 these kids have good education and good jobs.

4 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: But you
5 see -- look, we can debate this forever, but
6 here's the important thing, if I come to school,
7 okay, and my mother hasn't -- now, I go to
8 schools, a lot of schools, inner city and -- I
9 never go to anybody's but essentially working
10 neighborhoods, I'm not going to the private
11 schools and, you know, the expensive tuition
12 schools. It's he astounding to me how many kids I
13 see, young kids, their clothes smell bad, and they
14 smell bad. And the first thing the teacher
15 teaches them in first grade and kindergarten is
16 toilet training, and how to pick up a fork and
17 knife, because all they do is eat hand food like
18 hamburgers and hot dogs. And I'm not denigrating
19 anybody that's poor, don't misunderstand me. But
20 the concept of a family meal, I don't care where
21 it comes from, it could come from KFC or anyplace
22 else, but toilet training, washing, wash your
23 clothes, personal cleanliness, a mother who
24 doesn't take their kid out on the street, as I

0101

1 hear too many times, makes me cringe, cursing at
2 these little kids. You've all heard it. Calling
3 their kids horrible names, the kid -- what's the
4 kid going to do, he's not going to hit mom. He's
5 going to go to school and beat up on some other
6 little kid. And by the time I get to him,
7 Representative, I've got a real problem on my
8 hand.

9 REP. MANDERINO: I understand. And
10 the problem you've just described, if we ask
11 everybody in this room to make a list of solutions
12 to the problem you just described, how many would
13 have jails on that list?

14 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: But, you
15 know, here's the interesting thing --

16 REP. MANDERINO: None.

17 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: Here's
18 the thing -- remember I told you a few minutes, I
19 really don't want to monopolize your time, but I
20 don't believe, as I said before, when I was
21 growing up at 60th & Addison in Philadelphia,
22 roughly, contemporary with many people in this
23 room, it was okay if Mrs. Derickson son told my
24 mother if I was bad, just like Mrs. Johnson or

0102

1 whoever the lady or gentleman on the block was,
2 because when my mother came home if Mrs. Derickson
3 told her I was bad, Mrs. Derickson was not the
4 issue, I was the issue. And in my day, my
5 grandfather and my father shaved with razer with a
6 strap, right, that was my punishment. Now, they
7 didn't brutalize me. I got whacked on the fanny,
8 but I wasn't sent to the hospital, nobody beat me
9 up. And you can argue about hitting your child
10 versus not, I don't want to get into that debate,
11 it was what it was. Nowadays, if Mrs. Derickson
12 or Mrs. Johnson tells Mrs. Manderino that little
13 Johnny Manderino was bad, Mrs. Manderino is going
14 to get in your face in words of one syllable it's
15 none of your blankety blank business, stay out of
16 it.

17 REP. MANDERINO: Some Mrs.
18 Manderinos will still realize it's Johnny's
19 problem.

20 I'm sorry, I do appreciate very much
21 this dialogue. I thank you for the hard work that
22 you do. And I guess we will continue to figure
23 out in our role as law makers, which is not just
24 about making tough law, but about how we allocate

0103

1 resources to make healthy communities, we will
2 continue to struggle with that allocating
3 resources across the board to build healthy
4 communities. And I thank you for the role you
5 will help us play in that respect.

6 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you.

7 DISTRICT ATTORNEY ABRAHAM: Thank
8 you.

9 REP. CALTAGIRONE: We appreciate it.

10 Next we'll hear from Wayne Jacobs.

11 MR. JACOBS: Good morning.

12 REP. CALTAGIRONE: The stenographer
13 can't hear. She needs to be able to have a little
14 quiet, please.

15 Okay. Wayne.

16 MR. JACOBS: Good morning, my name
17 is Wayne Jacobs, I am cofounder and executive
18 director of X-Offenders for a community
19 empowerment. The president of my group, Steven
20 Blackburn, had an emergency and he had to go back
21 to his job. I'd like to say, first, that the
22 president of our organization, Steven Blackburn is
23 a pardoned lifer who was convicted of committing a
24 crime with a gun. And, myself, I'm a long-term

0104

1 ex-offender. I consider myself an expert on
2 crime, you know, from the many years that I have
3 invested and doing that kind of illegal activity.

4 And, first, I would like to move
5 away from my written statement, because there's
6 some other things that I heard today that I think
7 need to be addressed. And especially when it
8 comes down to the issue of gun violence. The way
9 that X-Offenders and myself look at it, we look at
10 it in terms if any of you all come home and find
11 that you got water running throughout your home,
12 what is the very first thing you will be supposed
13 to do? And I ask you all that question.

14 REP. MANDERINO: Turn off the water.

15 MR. JACOBS: Right. Right. To
16 address the flooding in your house, you must cut
17 the water off first, then you began to do the
18 assessment, the cleanup, the cost factor, you
19 know. And this is how we need to address that
20 issue of gun violence. When you look at
21 statistics, you've heard the Commissioner
22 testified about how many guns they have
23 confiscated over the years, knowing full well that
24 those who are arrested are prohibited from even

0105

1 purchasing a gun. How they are getting them, this
2 is the flood gate. And we are not addressing the
3 flood gate of how to cut the water off.

4 Now, Representative Jewell Williams
5 did introduce legislation that would totally cut
6 the flood gate of illegal guns into the community,
7 but it will reduce them dramatically. Let me give
8 you my past experience. Like I said before, I
9 used to be one of the ones that used to be
10 responsible for at least two, three percent of the
11 crime in the City. You check my record, it speaks
12 for itself. I was a very busy person back then.
13 However, one of the things that we used to do to
14 be able to get people to buy guns, we used to
15 always tell them, A, you never got to report it.
16 Okay. And if the police come to your house and
17 ask you about the gun, all you have to say, oh, it
18 got lost, it got stolen, the police would turn
19 around and walk away.

20 Now, this creates the opportunity
21 for people to buy and sell guns, you know, knowing
22 that they do not have to report them. And it is
23 really bazar, because understanding that guns are
24 the only product that has the Constitution of

0106

1 protection, then we have to look at it in another
2 way. Because the Constitution normally talks
3 about the legal movement, the legal aspects of
4 things. Now, whether we are talking about the
5 issue of loss and stolen guns, they no longer
6 have, in my mind, the protection of the
7 Constitution, because they are now illegal. And
8 the Constitution talk about legal movement of
9 things. The reporting of lost and stolen guns
10 does not address the front end of the gun. It
11 does not prohibit people, legal folks, from buying
12 as many guns as they want, that law does not
13 prohibit that. So it is not in conflict with the
14 Second Amendment right.

15 However, when the legislators talks
16 about the guns, they only talk about the end, the
17 back end of the gun. What did you do to a person
18 who is prohibited who gets busted with a gun? We
19 give them a million years. However, that person
20 wasn't the person that turned the gun illegal.
21 And the person that turns the gun illegal is the
22 creator of the crime. And what happened to them?
23 In state court you can't do nothing to them,
24 because there is no state laws that say that a

0107

1 straw purchaser, a person who gives a gun to an
2 illegal person should go to jail or be fined or be
3 whatever. We turn around and look to the federal
4 government to deal with that situation, you know.

5 So, our position is that you should
6 really look at the middle of the gun. And what I
7 mean by the middle, that is the illegal transfer.
8 By closing the loopholes on illegal transfers, you
9 will reduce a lot of the illegal guns being
10 flooded to this community.

11 You know, when -- let me say this, I
12 lost my son in 2003. However, four years before
13 that my organization has been out here pushing for
14 this type of legislation. And I personally feel
15 that our legislators failed us. You know, you all
16 quick to pass it off. Like today, I've been
17 hearing everything, the community's
18 responsibility. This person's responsibility.
19 Where is your all responsibility? Where is your
20 all responsibility in this whole dynamic of the
21 guns. You know, you constantly talks about the
22 NRA, but, however, when they do surveys, they find
23 that most Pennsylvanians support the reporting of
24 lost and stolen guns, however, you don't hear

0108

1 that. Why? Because of the other end of the
2 politics. You all have your own personal agenda.
3 You want to push your one gun a month without
4 reporting it. I mean, let's look at it. If you
5 get the one gun a month law passed, people can
6 still sell their guns and not report them. Okay.
7 You know, and that's where -- that's where it all
8 starts at. Having people -- people having the
9 ability to go and sell their guns and never have
10 to report them, you know.

11 When you look around and you see
12 what's going on, changing a little bit, just the
13 other day a young guy got killed at 25th &
14 Somerset. He got killed because he stepped up to
15 testify. There was no protection for him. The
16 first thing people say is, hey, you know, it's the
17 police fault. Then the police will say it the
18 court's fault. Then the courts will say, it's the
19 DA's fault. Nobody want to take responsibility
20 for not doing what they are supposed to do.

21 And it's the same thing with all
22 your legislators. You all refuse to take the
23 responsibility. It's easy to do. And that is to
24 pass a law of reporting of lost and stolen guns.

0109

1 How does that stop a person from inquiring? It
2 doesn't. It does stop a prohibited from
3 acquiring, but not the legal person.

4 So, basically -- I'm going to end
5 this by saying this, that I wish you all
6 legislators stop shaking your all responsibility.
7 I wish you all stop -- I wish you all legislators
8 stop planning and giving it all to the community.
9 And you all should do your job, and that job is
10 simple, pass a law of reporting of lost and stolen
11 guns. Once you do that, you will stop a lot of
12 straw purchasing. Right now, you know, if a guy
13 would go to his old lady and tell her to go ahead
14 and buy that gun and knowing that she knows that
15 it's wrong, but she has nothing to hide behind.
16 So if a law gets passed that say that you must
17 report your gun missing, then she going to turn
18 around and say, baby, I got to report this, you
19 know, then they may want to come in and
20 investigate. If I tell them I had a burglary,
21 they may come in and want to check the house out
22 to see if a burglary really happened, you know.
23 These -- you know, this is what we must do to stop
24 people from transferring their guns to have that

0110

1 law there, you know. So I'm going to end it now
2 with that. Thank you.

3 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you very
4 much for your testimony.

5 We have two more witnesses. Dr.
6 Chuck Williams, if he would come forward, and then
7 also Zeelena Wise.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you very much,
9 Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I have
10 to say that I am more than pleased to say, good
11 afternoon, to the Honorable Tony Peyton, Junior.
12 Young man worked very hard. Very hard. And you
13 know I mean that.

14 REP. PEYTON: Thank you.

15 THE WITNESS: I'm going to stray
16 from my remarks today a little bit, because we've
17 had a lot of people reading from their prepared
18 testimony. I'm sure you've read it; and if you
19 want to, you can at your leisure.

20 As was stated, my name is Chuck
21 Williams. I have a PhD in educational psychology,
22 a masters degree in counseling at MCP-Hahnemann
23 University. And I got my bachelors in psychology
24 from Temple. So I'm home grown. I used to live

0111

1 at 2608 North 18th Street, not too far from here,
2 very familiar with the Colorado Community Center.

3 A few weeks ago I was meeting with
4 State Representative Jewell Williams, we were
5 talking about violence in Philadelphia, in
6 particular in North Philadelphia, which is the
7 area I serve as the Director of Adolescent
8 Violence Reduction Partnership for IDAAY. And we
9 talked about prevention. And we talked about
10 intervention. And then we got on the issue of
11 parenting. And, to me, that is probably one of
12 the issues that we don't talk about enough.
13 Violent kids aren't born. No kid comes out of the
14 womb violent. They are either taught to be
15 violent or they are not taught how not to be
16 violent. I'm talking about morals and values and
17 character and faith. Those things are missing.

18 Now, I can say this because I am
19 from North Philadelphia. I went to Stanton,
20 Duckery, Gillespie before I became Dr. Chuck
21 Williams. I was this poor black kid in North
22 Philadelphia. I've dealt with this issue in my
23 personal life. You know, when you talk about kids
24 who've grown up in violent homes, I grew up in a

0112

1 violent home. It was so violent that DHS came in.
2 We all know DHS. Department of Human Services
3 took me out of the home, along with my sister and
4 my two brothers. And I was raised at St. Francis
5 Home For Boys, which I just visited this morning
6 to give an address about hope and things like
7 that. This is a very important day for me.

8 The reason why I was taken out of
9 the home is because the home was dysfunctional.
10 Because my parents as Representative Manderino has
11 already stated advocated their responsibility.
12 Things are different now, but back then they were
13 a mess. Had I not been removed from the them, had
14 DHS not intervened, I wouldn't be able to sit
15 before you today as a young black male from North
16 Philly with a PhD, at Temple, by the way, I can't
17 say that enough.

18 I think that we can continue to fund
19 programs like AVRPP. We can fund the programs that
20 we had in juvenile probation, I wish we didn't
21 have juvenile probation. We can fund the Youth
22 Study Center, which I wish we didn't have a Youth
23 Study Center. And all these other intervention
24 programs and outreach programs for young people

0113

1 who are violent and aggressive trying to get
2 things to sort of turn around in their lives with
3 mentors and clinicians and people who are
4 responsible for modifying their behavior.

5 But everything starts in the home.
6 No matter what I do as a clinician or a program
7 director or community leader, activist, no matter
8 what you do as the elected officials, and all the
9 other folks who run programs in the room and do
10 things in their own lives as community leaders, at
11 the end of the day the child will always be in the
12 home. That's the bottom line. We need more
13 services in the home. We need more services
14 offered, particularly as it relates to young
15 mothers, as well as young fathers, but we always
16 know the young mothers are always stuck with the
17 responsibility. We need to teach, and DA talked
18 about this. Unfortunately, when I was growing up
19 and definitely when you were all growing up,
20 people just had sense, right? Am I right about
21 that? Call it common sense, just call it sense.
22 You knew that you couldn't allow your three-year
23 old or your four-year old to stay up until eleven,
24 twelve, one o'clock at night watching,

0114

1 unfortunately, Rated R movies or watching BET
2 until three or four in the morning or listening to
3 Power 99 or all the other radio stations that are
4 out there, and I don't blame them.

5 But, today, you have to actually
6 have a conversation with parents about that. You
7 have to actually say to a parent, you need to save
8 this money to ensure that you have food in your
9 home. You need to save this money to ensure your
10 child has shoes on his or her feet and clothes on
11 her back so you can pay your light bill, your
12 water bill, you electric bill. You need to not go
13 to the club tonight so you can be up early in the
14 morning and go to that parent/teacher conference
15 for your special ed child. You have to have
16 conversations with parents about that. I treated
17 behavioral health for several years. One of the
18 reasons why I stopped, not because I treated
19 autistic kids or kids with ADHD and conduct
20 disorder, was because the parents were a mess. I
21 can tell you that. Hopefully, you all don't get
22 mad at me for saying that, I'm not trying to be
23 disrespectful.

24 I had to say to a parent with a five

0115

1 year old kid with ADHD and would come to me every
2 chance that he got, it's probably not a good idea
3 to allow this five year old child to play Grand
4 Theft Auto. We know that game, right? It's a
5 very violent game. You're killing people where
6 you get to beat up a prostitute. I had to say to
7 this mom, I don't think that's appropriate, but do
8 I have to be a PhD to say that, or a therapist to
9 say that, you know. When I was growing up, as I
10 said, people had sense. They don't now,
11 Representative Manderino. These parents have to
12 be taught the basics, and that's the big problem.

13 Even education, we talked about
14 education. One of the biggest indicators of
15 schools' success, which is linked to school
16 readiness, is whether or not the parents have done
17 the right thing at the beginning, reading to your
18 child early and often, keeping out of their lives
19 very early on any kind of negative influences, and
20 just being a positive model and experience for
21 children. I've walks into many homes -- and I'm
22 only thirty-three, by the way, and already I'm fed
23 up -- I've walked into many homes where you had
24 the parent on the phone cursing, for whatever

0116

1 reason, they're cursing because they are mad. And
2 now they curse when they are happy, I don't get
3 that. We didn't do that when I was growing up,
4 so. And I got a PhD in psychology and I can't
5 figure out what the motivation is for that. And
6 they got three, four young impressionable kids at
7 their feet looking up at them listening to them.
8 When they get to school, they cursing out the
9 teacher, we want to know why.

10 And then, as DA Lynne Abraham said,
11 then they come to us, fix my kid. What? Fix your
12 kid? I'm confused, I thought it was your sacred
13 responsibility to guide, nurture, care for and,
14 above all, love your children. Now, when you
15 don't do that, you know, then we have to get
16 involved and have hearings such as this.

17 The other thing that I want to
18 mention is it's politically incorrect at times in
19 our communities, and you know what I'm talking
20 about, to say maybe this kid should not stay in
21 this home. Maybe these people at this time aren't
22 fit to be parents. I rather take them out of the
23 home and put them in a place where I lived like
24 St. Francis Home For Boys or St. Joseph's than put

0117

1 them in a juvenile detention facility or a jail.
2 I rather take them out early and give them a
3 better way and show them a better way so we don't
4 have to have hearings like this. But people are
5 afraid and then they say, okay, you know, the
6 black family's already sort of dysfunctional, it's
7 been torn apart, and we are just tearing it apart
8 even more by taking the kids out and keeping them
9 out and DHS and on and on. And what I want to say
10 to you as someone who's been through it and
11 someone who has a level of expertise in these
12 areas, sometimes we have to do that, you
13 understand me, Black People? Sometimes we have to
14 that do that. You don't do that because you don't
15 love them, but you do it because you do. So that
16 you can ensure that one day they can sit in front
17 of a panel like this as an expert and offer their
18 testimony.

19 What we need to do is yes funding
20 programs such as AVRIP, that's very important, but
21 we need to look at funding more intensive services
22 for parents in the homes, that's how we can turn
23 this around.

24 Police Commissioner Sylvester

0118

1 Johnson says, we can't arrest our way out of this
2 problem, and he's right about that; but, guess
3 what, we can parent our way out of this problem.
4 We can parent our way out of this problem.

5 If we had people who were more
6 willing to be parents and good parents, we
7 wouldn't have this. You wouldn't have the 60-year
8 old teacher like Frank Burd from Germantown High
9 School sitting at home convalescenting with a
10 broken neck in several different places, because
11 the kids -- two kids, three kids beat him up
12 because he said they shouldn't have an iPod in
13 class. So he took the iPod away. And then they
14 beat him down. He got ruled on, right? Broke his
15 neck in several different places? Now he's
16 convalescenting. He's got screws in his neck and
17 dealing with rehabilitation and all kinds of
18 therapy.

19 You can't tell me that a child who
20 came from a home where there was faith, they
21 taught morals and values, would do something like
22 that. Can you tell me that? They wouldn't do
23 that. But the kids come to school the way they
24 are, because the parents don't start very early on

0119

1 by teaching them morals and values and character
2 development.

3 And I can't say it enough, that is
4 the crux of the problem. So when they don't do
5 it, we have to step in and do it. We have to fund
6 programs and get the kids out of the home and give
7 them a chance at a better life.

8 That's my testimony. Thank you.

9 REP. MANDERINO: Wait, don't leave.

10 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Can we hear from
11 her first?

12 MS. WISE: Unlike my colleague here,
13 I will read what I wrote, because I will go off
14 course if I don't.

15 Good morning. My name is Zeelyna
16 Wise, and I am here this morning representing
17 Congreso de Latinos Unidos and the work we do in
18 North Philadelphia to eradicate violence in our
19 neighborhoods. I was chosen to speak because I am
20 the AVR P staff supervisor who works with the youth
21 workers who mentor the young people that are
22 at-risk in our area. I work with young people who
23 face various challenges in their daily lives. I
24 have been able to see first hand some of issues

0120

1 that our young people face and some of the issues
2 that families are dealing with in our
3 ever-changing times.

4 Congreso is a community-based
5 nonprofit organization based in Eastern North
6 Philadelphia, we work to strengthen Latino
7 communities through social, economic, education,
8 and health services; leadership development; and
9 advocacy. We serve over 10,000 youth per year
10 through over 60 programs. We thank the House
11 Judiciary Committee for coming to North
12 Philadelphia and for prioritizing the needs of the
13 Latino population in our great state, especially
14 knowing that Latino communities have unique
15 challenges and are a growing population in the
16 Commonwealth. In Philadelphia alone, since 1990,
17 the Latino population has increased by over 65%,
18 and more than half of the Latino population is
19 younger than 25 years of age.

20 I am here today to talk to you about
21 the violence we witness daily basis in this area
22 and how we intend to eradicate this violence, and
23 the need for your assistance in this matter. And
24 let us be clear that violence, including the

0121

1 outburst of gun violence, is not unique to
2 Philadelphia. I imagine that much of what I share
3 is similar to the scenarios you will hear in the
4 rest of our urban centers throughout Pennsylvania.

5 First, let us address the issue of
6 gun violence. As a way of sharing some background
7 with you, the majority of Congreso's clients
8 reside in an area well known for
9 disproportionately high rates of violent crime,
10 domestic violence, and drug related crime. For
11 example, in 2002, the rate of violent crime per
12 10,000 people was 1.6 times higher in our police
13 districts. Moreover, in 2003, the Philadelphia
14 Police Department responded to 115,745
15 domestic-related calls citywide, and nearly 20% of
16 those calls (20,577) were to the Philadelphia
17 Police Department's East Division which
18 encompasses Eastern North Philadelphia. This year
19 alone the rate of homicides in Philadelphia is
20 over 85% of which are perpetrated by guns, this
21 has exceeded the incredible number of homicides
22 last year. Violence is very real, and our youth
23 experience it everyday. As such, we implore the
24 State Legislature to consider the package of 13

0122

1 bills that were presented to you at the beginning
2 of the year. Of particular importance to us is
3 restricting the number of handgun purchases to one
4 per month, or at the very least giving
5 Philadelphia the authority to make this and other
6 gun legislation decisions for its residents. To
7 date, there has not been a valid argument against
8 passing this legislation in today's context.
9 Unless you live a life in violence everyday, you
10 cannot truly understand why these bills are so
11 imperative. Through my work I live in this world
12 of violence, so I plead with you to prioritize
13 Governor Rendell's wish and Representative Evans'
14 wish to limit handgun purchases. Congreso sent 30
15 people to Harrisburg last September to implore
16 over 25 legislators to do the same.

17 Right now, Washington, DC is
18 fighting to retain its ban on handguns. Whether
19 the ban has solely diminished gun violence in that
20 city is highly contentious and improbable.
21 Congreso agrees that gun legislation is only an
22 initial or at least partial step to eradicate the
23 violence that our youth live in throughout the
24 state. For this reason, Congreso also advocates

1 for a holistic, streamlined, coordinated and
2 effective approach to fight this epidemic. By
3 looking at gun legislation and increasing the
4 number of officers in high risk communities where
5 there is not police and community engagement we
6 run the risk of creating a police state. But if
7 real change is to be successful, we have to fund
8 effective violence prevention and intervention
9 programs. The compilation and coordination of all
10 of these tactics is much more efficient and
11 effective in addressing the public health problem
12 that is youth violence.

13 Latino youth have not faired well
14 against this backdrop of violence. Steadily
15 increasing numbers of Latino youth are exposed to
16 violent situations through family, peers, and
17 community members and too frequently they either
18 become victims or sometimes even perpetrators. As
19 such, they enter the juvenile justice system at a
20 disproportionate rate. This demonstrates a clear
21 need for an increase in culturally and
22 linguistically appropriate violence-prevention
23 services for Latino youth.

24 After 30 years of service, Congreso

1 prioritizes working with our neighborhood youth
2 and their families to stem the tide of our youth
3 becoming involved in violent situations, crime and
4 drugs. Congreso is a partner in the Blueprint
5 for a Safer Philadelphia, and we are delighted
6 that this Blueprint effort is focused on a myriad
7 of strategies. As an agency, our contribution to
8 this effort will result in the development of a
9 youth leadership council. The council will
10 support workshops and other prevention and
11 intervention strategies with at-risk youth,
12 support the work of the Latino Juvenile Justice
13 Network (which supports community-based
14 alternatives to incarceration and educates
15 entities on disproportionate minority contact),
16 and engage the community through civic
17 participation.

18 We are also providers in the City's
19 Adolescent Violence Reduction Project (AVRP).
20 AVRP works in conjunction with community-based
21 alternative programs to provide intervention to
22 youth, aged 10-15, who are at high risk of
23 perpetrating or committing violence. I mentor and
24 supervise the 12 AVRP youth workers that Congreso

0125

1 employs, who in turn intensively serve over 100
2 youth. This program and others at Congreso are
3 geared toward mentorship. Mentorship of young
4 people is one of the most positive and powerful
5 means of bringing about social change. Research
6 even shows that a relationship with a caring adult
7 is one of the most influential components that
8 lead youth toward success. Congreso mentors
9 out-of-school youth through our E3 center,
10 pregnant teens through our health and workforce
11 development programs, youth who are drug and
12 alcohol users through our Aftercare program,
13 truant youth through the Parent Truancy Officer
14 program, and in-school youth through our
15 after-school programming.

16 Mentors give support in the areas
17 where youth need the most encouragement: School,
18 home, peer pressure, and outside stimuli such as
19 drugs. Mentors are able to develop skills that
20 some of our youth have not yet explored in
21 themselves. Skills that are developed by our
22 mentors include problem solving, anger management,
23 healthy ways of expressing of emotions.
24 Interpersonal skills between parents and school

1 authorities are enforced and improved. Attendance
2 and the rates of truancy have been improved by
3 having a strong support for our youth, changing
4 non-compliant behavior into compliance.

5 We need these types of programs,
6 programs that are culturally diverse in meeting
7 the needs of our community. And we need for "you"
8 to support the programs that have been proven to
9 work effectively. Programs which allows enough
10 time spent with an individual to truly transform
11 their lives. After all, the alternatives are
12 typically harmful and even more costly. On
13 average, approximately \$3,000 is dedicated to each
14 YOUtl1 slot in our E3 center each year, while
15 upwards of \$40,000 is spent on youth placed in
16 residential treatment.

17 In order to bring the point home,
18 how quality prevention and intervention programs
19 are worth your investment, let me read to you the
20 purpose statement written for one of our
21 after-school programs and a letter written by the
22 same youth. This sums up how most kids feel about
23 having a program that helps them feel safe and
24 cared for: "At Congreso, we work very hard to

1 provide a safe, secure, and loving environment for
2 our youth. Our building is not a school, although
3 to some it is a place for learning. To others it
4 is home. We see the light in our youth; helping
5 the children of today become the leaders of
6 tomorrow."

7 And here is the letter written by
8 that same youth.

9 "Eight long months have passed since
10 I started the AVR program, and if you look at me
11 you might think nothing has changed. The truth
12 is, almost everything about me is different, from
13 the way I feel about myself on the inside to what
14 I show and what I feel on the outside. It took a
15 lot for me to get where I am right now, and if it
16 were not for the Congreso staff I never would have
17 made it. When I first started at Congreso I did
18 not have plans on coming back a second day.
19 Something about the place brought me back; I liked
20 being there. The positive energy kept me coming
21 back. The best part was that I had an activity
22 leader like Ms. Z... As of Feb 5, 2007 I am
23 official Fairhill Community student. Now I can
24 work on the second step, getting me to stay in

1 school. I know I've made a lot of progress in the
2 past eight months but I still need work. Without
3 program I don't know where I would be right now.
4 They helped me make a big change in my life. I
5 still need Congreso services to better my future."

6
7 According to the IQ testing this
8 youth is smarter than 91% of the population. She
9 was placed in a disciplinary school after one
10 incident, and she slowly stop attending because
11 she was placed in a classroom with other students
12 who couldn't read at a 9th or 10th grade level.
13 She eventually stopped attending school giving the
14 reason that "it was not in a place of learning".
15 This is a youth who has been touched consistently
16 by gun violence and the like in her neighborhood.

17 Congreso is an organization that
18 prides itself on strong community support and
19 service. I have been told by our youth "they want
20 help inside their homes". They want their
21 families back. They want the schools to care
22 about their achievements not failures. They
23 desire programs that develop and encourage growth
24 and promote real skills that they can use toward

0129

1 future goals.

2 We have developed a Parent and
3 Family Support Group With a holistic approach to
4 services. We have developed a "Freedom to Change"
5 curriculum that was developed by the parents for
6 parents, based on listening to their needs and
7 factoring in their cultural considerations. We
8 don't have families that have problems; we have
9 families with "possibilities". Everyone has the
10 ability to change, and they should be supported
11 and encouraged to move forward. The focus of the
12 program is to address family dynamics and
13 structure; teach the developmental stages of
14 children; exercise positive discipline; parent &
15 child self-esteem building; teach active
16 communication and the art of listening; manage
17 anger & guilt; cope with stressful situations; and
18 find new pathways for conflict resolution.
19 Parents learn practical tools to raise their
20 children by enhancing parent/children
21 relationships and family life, to provide skills
22 to raise a thinking child, to prevent and
23 intervene in the children's self destructive
24 behaviors, and to encourage the integration of

0130

1 child and family quality of time.

2 By practicing the art of listening
3 we may be able to detour future breakdowns within
4 our families. Families need to feel supported not
5 condemned by the same system that is working to
6 assist them. By empowering families we create a
7 ripple effect that will positively impact the
8 overall family and community systems. This is the
9 ripple effect and this is how it looks;

10 1. Schools will receive more
11 parental support, because families will be
12 receiving support and mentorship.

13 2. Reduction of truancy, parents
14 will hold youth accountable for attending school,
15 because parents will be better educated about the
16 school system.

17 3. Reduction of crime there will be
18 more after-school programs, keeping our youths off
19 the street and hanging out, keep them from being
20 prime candidates for drugs and many forms of
21 crime.

22 Through the coordinated efforts of
23 the Parent Truancy Officers, parents working as
24 peers can effectively be the liaison between

0131

1 parents, schools and youth thus assisting in the
2 education of our families being empowered and
3 having access to information that could better
4 assist them in helping their youth.

5 So, yes, please advocate with us for
6 gun legislation that protects residents throughout
7 the Commonwealth, or at least give Philadelphia's
8 citizens the right to determine the safety of
9 their own children. We understand that the need
10 for guns in an urban environment is quite
11 different than those in other areas. Together we
12 seek your collaboration for supporting
13 community-based, family youth programs. Only
14 through these partnerships and multiple efforts
15 will we witness the eradication of violence in our
16 neighborhoods.

17 "It is the right of every child to
18 have a safe place to hang out to learn and grow."

19 Thank you for your time and our
20 doors are always open for you to visit Congreso to
21 see how we are an effective partner in this
22 process.

23 Thank you.

24 REP. MANDERINO: Mr. Chairman, what

0132

1 a great way to end with Dr. Williams and Ms. Wise.
2 And both of you talked a lot about violence
3 prevention. I think I live in the real world like
4 you do. And we can all want families to get back
5 to the way families were 50 years, and that's a
6 goal would he ought to have, but we have to deal
7 with the families as they are now.

8 Let me just share some numbers with
9 you and you decide who's winning in this battle.
10 Because I have the advantage, or disadvantage some
11 days I feel, of sitting on both the Judiciary
12 Committee, which is what this committee is, where
13 everybody's solution is make tougher laws, make
14 more crimes, and lock more people up. I also sit
15 on the Health and Human Service Committee, where
16 the solution is prevent, intervention, assistance,
17 and help. And probably, most importantly, I sit
18 on the Appropriations Committee that decides who's
19 winning that battle based on where we put our
20 money, because that really shows our priorities.

21 We are trying to pass a budget this
22 year by June 30th. We are spending 1.5 billion
23 new dollars proposed in this budget to build some
24 more prisons. We have \$45 million that the county

0133

1 children and youth workers which includes the
2 DHS's all around the state are begging us to put
3 back in the budget that's not there for money that
4 they are using for prevention service for our
5 young people, for juvenile detentions in some of
6 the counties, but in Philadelphia we have been
7 using it for prevention.

8 We have something called a nurse
9 family partners program in Pennsylvania that's
10 going into those homes at risk families and
11 intervening from the birth of that child through
12 age three. We have \$2 million in that program,
13 that's barely hitting two percent of the need in
14 this state. We have a request of the Governor for
15 300 million additional education dollars to help
16 make sure that we get kindergarten and Pre-K, so
17 kids come to school ready to learn and don't sit
18 in the classroom not knowing their colors or
19 knowing their ABCs.

20 300 million, plus 45 million, plus
21 if I want to be very conservative and say instead
22 of two million, let's just get 20 million and hit
23 10 percent of the problem instead of two percent
24 of the problem, that's \$350 million that we are

0134

1 fighting about trying to keep in the budget, and
2 no one is fighting about the 1.5 billion dollars
3 proposed to spend for prisons.

4 Now, we need safe communities, I
5 understand that. But dollar for dollar, I firmly
6 believe we get more bang out of our buck for what
7 you are talking about in terms of violence
8 prevention. And we have to figure out the tough
9 decisions, and when I say "we", not just law
10 makers.

11 But District Attorney Abraham was
12 right, people come and say, "lock them up and
13 throw away the key", and they never stop and say
14 if I had to tell you how to allocate my tax
15 dollars, do I want a hundred percent of that to go
16 into that or do I want some of it going to this
17 other stuff that will prevent me in the future
18 from having to lock up more and throw away the
19 key. And that's kind of the tough decisions that
20 we have to make.

21 Your voices are so important,
22 because your voices need to get heard over or at
23 least at an equal volume of those that are saying
24 just lock them up and throw away the key, or else

0135

1 we will never build a healthy community, we will
2 never build healthy communities, our communities
3 will just getting worse.

4 I'm sorry, I'm just kind of
5 preaching to you, just like you were preaching to
6 us, but it's so frustrating to have to make these
7 hard choices.

8 And I just want to thank you for
9 getting your message out and ask you to continue
10 to beat the drumbeats so that it just doesn't look
11 like the only solution is more crimes and more
12 prisons.

13 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank both of you
14 for your time.

15 This meeting is adjourned.

16 (12:55 p.m.)

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1 I, Tracey L. Pinsky, Registered
2 Professional Reporter and Notary Public of the
3 State of Pennsylvania, do hereby certify that the
4 foregoing is a true and accurate computer-aided
5 transcript of the hearing as taken
6 stenographically by and before me at the time,
7 place and on the date hereinbefore set forth.

8 I further certify that I am neither
9 attorney nor counsel for, not related to or
10 employed by, any of the parties to the action in
11 which this hearing was taken; further, that I am
12 not a relative or employee of any attorney or
13 counsel employed in this case, nor am I
14 financially interested in this action.

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Registered Professional Reporter
Notary Public of Pennsylvania
My commission expires 7-12-10