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May 5, 2022

The Honorable Jim Kenney
Mayor
Room 215 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

The Honorable Darrell L. Clarke
President, City Council
City Hall, Room 494
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Mayor Kenney and Council President Clarke,

Throughout my career of public service, I have pushed for solutions to the epidemic of gun violence that infects Philadelphia and other cities across the country. As the city works on its budget for the upcoming fiscal year, I urge you to increase funding for community violence intervention and prioritize hiring more police officers as part that plan. **While individual officers should always be held accountable for unlawful or inappropriate actions, we must make this additional investment now to help create a better tomorrow.**

As you know, Philadelphia had the most homicides in recorded history in 2021 at 562—with nearly 90 percent of them being gun-related.¹ Black men are 14 times more likely than white men to die from a gun-related homicide.² Consequently, far too many Black children are left without fathers and countless numbers of Black mothers are confronted with the tragic deaths of their sons. Due to the gun violence crisis happening in Philadelphia and across the nation, I spent the last several months holding roundtables with local experts, organizations, and academic researchers to develop a plan to reduce gun violence (see attached). I believe this seven-point

¹ Office of the Controller (Mar. 10, 2022). Mapping Philadelphia's gun violence crisis. City of Philadelphia. <https://controller.phila.gov/philadelphia-audits/mapping-gun-violence/#/2022>

² The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (Feb. 2021). A public health crisis decades in the making: A review of 2019 CDC gun mortality data. <https://efsgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019CDCdata.pdf>

plan, “Ending the Other Epidemic: A Plan to Fight Gun Violence”³, can not only help reduce gun violence in my home city of Philadelphia, but in communities across the nation.

As noted in my gun violence prevention plan, evidence shows that the use of focused deterrence, hot spots policing, and problem-oriented policing are effective law enforcement strategies at reducing gun violence. Hot spots policing requires focusing law enforcement resources in areas that have shown to be where most of the gun violence occurs. Research shows that shooters are a relatively small group of people, and that gun violence is most predominant in certain areas of the city. In Philadelphia, 2 percent of known individuals are responsible for 80 percent of the city’s gun violence. However, without enough law enforcement resources, like police officers, these strategies cannot be executed properly, and gun violence will prevail. The City needs to ensure that the police department has enough resources to effectively implement these proven strategies and focus on these hot spots, which requires an adequate amount of police officers.

Another key element of my plan urges more cooperation between Federal, state, and local organizations and agencies which often work in silos, even those that provide similar services. To ensure we are effectively identifying and helping individuals at risk for gun violence, we need the coordination and collaboration of all services and across all relevant agencies and organizations, as well as more avenues for funding to increase personnel.

Accordingly, I urge you to use some of the city’s remaining American Rescue Plan dollars to increase funding in your budget to hire additional law enforcement officers. Your current budget will only cover pay increases for the current force which is down approximately 1,000 officers between short term disability and vacancies. The Commissioner has indicated that she would need more resources to start filling those vacancies and she must have those resources. It is to all our benefit to ensure the Philadelphia Police Department has the funds and the workforce it needs to respond to this crisis.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dwight Evans".

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

³Ending the Other Epidemic: A Plan to Fight Gun Violence
https://evans.house.gov/sites/evans.house.gov/files/wysiwyg_uploaded/Gun%20Violence%20Prevention%20Plan%20%28FINAL%29_1.pdf

CC: Sen. Vincent Hughes
Rep. Joanna McClinton
Rep. Jordan Harris