

January 21, 2020

Hon. James Kenney, Mayor
City Hall Rm 215
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Re: Reinstitution of Abandoned Gun Violence "Focused Deterrence" Programs

Dear Mayor Kenney:

Center City Residents' Association (CCRA) is writing in support of the proposed Focused Deterrence gun violence initiative as described in a Dec 6 Inquirer article. Per the article, the program first identifies populations likely to be involved in violent altercations. These populations are then presented a "carrot or stick" choice - support via education, employment, and social welfare outreach or, alternatively, targeted prosecution in the criminal justice system.

The implementation of this program is all the more important because Philadelphia is playing "catch up" in supporting this approach. In 2015, the City abandoned two Focused Deterrence programs which, according to Temple professor Catenna Roman, were discontinued, "one for lack of funding and one mostly for lack of will . . . even in light of (Inquirer) evaluations finding that each intervention reduced shootings by at least 30% . . ."

Since Philadelphia's programs were terminated, other cities have seen Focused Deterrence programs produce dramatic results. On December 10, David Muhammad, Executive Director of the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform reported to a Philadelphia Citizen's gathering that Oakland California had seen gun violence halved in the last five years, a period during which Philadelphia homicides escalated by 30% from 248 in 2014 to 351 in 2018.

Philadelphia should adopt programs both for at-risk individuals with no criminal record and for residents with a prior record. In October 2019 the journal Crime and Delinquency reported a study showing that probationers and parolees in a call-in Focused Deterrence program in the city of Detroit were 30% less likely to be re-arrested for any crime for up to three years -- and that about 47% of those who had a violent record were less likely to be re-arrested for a violent crime.

We urge you to place this program as a top priority for your current term.

Respectfully yours,


Barbara A. Halpern
Vice President, Community Outreach

cc: Acting Commissioner Christine Coulter
cc: Members of City Council

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