



Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D. C. 20530

October 4, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS

FROM: THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "S. J. Blyden", written over the printed name of the Attorney General.

SUBJECT: Project Safe Neighborhoods

I have pledged to do everything in my authority to confront vigorously, effectively, and immediately the violent crime that deprives too many communities of the safety and security they need to flourish. In the past, the Department has worked in close partnership with state, local, and tribal law enforcement through the Department's signature gun and gang crime reduction program, Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). This program had a significant impact on violent crime. A research study published in 2009 found that PSN successfully reduced violent crime by 4.1%, with case studies demonstrating the program reduced crime by up to 42% in specific locations. Unfortunately, the Department's support of this successful initiative has waned in recent years. Now, violent crime is on the rise.

We cannot afford to be complacent in the face of violence that threatens too many of our communities. Today I am taking steps to strengthen the PSN program and making clear that it is a Department priority. All United States Attorneys must implement an enhanced violent crime reduction program that incorporates the lessons learned since the original program's launch in 2001 and leverages new strategies to help turn the tide against violent crime.

The goal of this enhanced program is to bring together all levels of law enforcement and the communities we serve to reduce violent crime and make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. PSN will take a comprehensive approach to public safety—one that includes prevention, enforcement, and reentry efforts—while ensuring that Department prosecutors focus on the work they do best: investigating and prosecuting crimes. Every United States Attorney will lead the way toward bringing the full extent of criminal sanctions to bear on violent offenders, deterring further crime, and empowering our law enforcement and community partners to take back our streets.

Each United States Attorney must implement a plan—based on five principles—to address the most significant violent crime in his or her district. This approach builds on past successes by integrating proven methods of reducing violent crime with new strategies and technology that will make our efforts more efficient and effective.

First, leadership. We have learned that strong leadership by the United States Attorney and a committed United States Attorney's Office are key to the program's success. As the

cornerstone of the federal law enforcement response to crime in their jurisdictions, United States Attorneys must therefore take a leadership role in developing and implementing this crime-reduction program.

Second, partnership. We have learned that effective violence reduction depends on working in partnership with a wide range of engaged stakeholders. The United States Attorney must develop and sustain vital partnerships with federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement and prosecutors; work jointly to identify the most significant violent crime problems facing the district and develop a coordinated plan of attack; and effectively use all available resources, including existing task forces and initiatives. Community support is integral to the success of these crime-fighting efforts, and robust partnerships should include community groups and victims' advocates. Law enforcement or academic research entities can also be of great assistance in helping to target enforcement efforts against the most violent offenders.

Third, targeted and prioritized enforcement. We have learned that focused enforcement efforts yield the greatest reductions in violent crime. In addition, there have been significant advances in technology and data availability that enable us to better identify enforcement priorities. All enforcement efforts should harness this full range of available information and technology to identify the locations within the district in greatest need of comprehensive violent crime reduction efforts and the offenders who are driving the violence in those areas. We must then target those offenders for prosecution in the jurisdiction that can provide the most certain and appropriate sanction. By using the most effective law enforcement tools and techniques to identify and prosecute the most violent offenders, we will send the clear message that we will protect communities against those that choose to do them harm.

Fourth, prevention of additional violence. We have also learned that although enforcement is at the heart of violent crime reduction efforts, prevention and deterrence of additional crime are required for lasting impact. Accordingly, PSN now explicitly recognizes that violence reduction partnerships must work to prevent and deter crime by prioritizing efforts such as ensuring public awareness of the violent crime reduction program and enforcement results; communicating directly to offenders about the consequences of continuing violent behaviors; and supporting locally-based prevention and reentry efforts.

Fifth, accountability. We have learned that to assess the program's effectiveness it is important to develop ways to measure our impact on violent crime. Because PSN is a Department priority, I will hold each United States Attorney accountable for results. I expect that United States Attorneys will closely follow the effect their effort is having in their local communities, and will adjust their approach as necessary.

This framework will enable each United States Attorney, in collaboration with law enforcement and community partners, to develop a violence reduction plan that meets local needs, while leveraging the power of federal law and federal courts against the most violent offenders.

We remain cognizant that federal law enforcement represents only about 15% of all law enforcement resources nationwide. That is why our partnerships with—and support of—law enforcement and the communities they serve are critical to addressing violent crime. As part of

PSN, the Department will continue to make available training and technical assistance to our state, local, and tribal partners, to ensure they have the information they need to succeed. Further information on available training opportunities will be forthcoming.

The Deputy Attorney General will oversee implementation of PSN, direct Department components to provide any necessary support for this program, and issue any clarification and guidance he deems appropriate for its effective implementation. As part of that implementation, I expect that all United States Attorneys will develop a plan to reduce violent crime that incorporates the above principles, and will review their referral and prosecution guidelines to ensure consistency with these principles and the Department's violent crime reduction priorities.

We can never cede a single neighborhood, block, or street corner to violent criminals. By strengthening PSN, we take an important step in restoring safety and security to our communities. I look forward to hearing in the coming months about your implementation of this program, which will help make our country a safer place for all.