



December 10, 2024

700 Pennsylvania Avenue SE
Ste. #2032
Washington, DC 20003
6B@anc.dc.gov

OFFICERS

Chairperson

Edward Ryder

Vice Chair

Vince Mareino

Secretary

David Sobelsohn

Treasurer

Frank Avery

Parliamentarian

VACANT

COMMISSIONERS

SMD 01 Frank Avery

SMD 02 Jerry Sroufe

SMD 03 David Sobelsohn

SMD 04 Frank D’Andrea

SMD 05 VACANT

SMD 06 Chander Jayaraman

SMD 07 Vince Mareino

SMD 08 Edward Ryder

SMD 09 Matt LaFortune

The Honorable Mayor Bowser, Brian Schwalb, and Members of the DC Council

John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL: Muriel.bowser@dc.gov, brian.schwalb@dc.gov, pmendelson@dccouncil.gov, kmcduffie@dccouncil.gov, abonds@dccouncil.gov, rwhite@dccouncil.gov, chenderson@dccouncil.gov, bnadeau@dccouncil.gov, bpinto@dccouncil.gov, mfrumin@dccouncil.gov, jlewisgeorge@dccouncil.gov, zparker@dccouncil.gov, callen@dccouncil.gov, vgray@dccouncil.gov, twhite@dccouncil.gov

Re: Urgent Need for a Coordinated, Comprehensive Strategy to Address Gun Violence in Washington, DC

At a properly noticed general meeting on December 10, with a quorum present, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6B voted 9-0-0, based on the unanimous recommendation of its Public Safety Committee, to submit the following request.

Dear Mayor Bowser, Attorney General Schwalb, and Members of the DC Council:

On behalf of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B (ANC 6B) and the residents we represent, ANC 6B writes to urge your administration and the DC Council to take immediate, coordinated action to reduce gun violence across the District of Columbia. While crime rates have declined since last year, long-term safety for all District residents requires collaborative, evidence-based, community-led, and racially equitable solutions.

Washington, DC is a resource-rich city, yet persistent gaps in coordination between existing services and government offices undermine our ability to effectively address gun violence. National and local experts, including contributors to the Justice Policy Institute’s December 2023 report *Missed Opportunities: Why Inaction on Preventative Measures Undermines Public Safety in Washington, DC*, consistently emphasize the importance of public health approaches to community safety that integrate prevention, intervention, and accountability.

On November 14, 2024, [ANC 6B’s Public Safety Committee co-hosted a virtual public safety forum](#) with national and local gun violence prevention experts, including leaders from other major cities. During this forum, key themes emerged regarding the District’s challenges and opportunities:

1. A lack of a comprehensive, coordinated gun violence reduction strategy.

The *National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform’s (NICJR) Gun Violence Problem Analysis Summary Report* and its *2022 Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan*, commissioned by DC, outlined clear steps for addressing gun violence. Unfortunately,

this plan was never fully implemented, largely due to a lack of buy-in from District leaders and insufficient coordination among public safety offices.

NICJR and other experts emphasized the critical role of an adequately staffed and empowered Office of Gun Violence Prevention to lead these efforts. Leaders from St. Louis and Indianapolis who spoke at the forum underscored the importance of these offices, highlighting how robust leadership, adequate resources, and interagency collaboration can dramatically improve public safety outcomes. **It is troubling that DC’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention has lacked a director for several years.**

2. **The need to prioritize and fully fund violence interrupter programs.**
Violence interrupter programs are a proven, evidence-based approach to preventing gun violence before it occurs. Despite their success in DC and nationwide, these programs remain underfunded, and their workers—who perform high-risk, professional public health work—are not adequately compensated.
3. **The absence of public health approaches mandated by law.**
The NEAR Act mandates public health approaches to public safety, but its implementation has been minimal at best. Violence interrupter programs and other community-based initiatives require increased funding, coordination, and support to succeed. Additionally, the forum raised significant concerns about a lack of data sharing among public safety agencies, further hindering progress.

We urge the District of Columbia’s elected officials to prioritize the following actions:

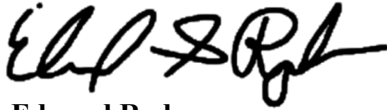
1. **Develop and implement a citywide strategy for gun violence reduction:**
 - Base the strategy on NICJR’s recommendations and insights from community-based leaders with extensive experience in gun violence prevention.
 - Secure the necessary resources and leadership to ensure its adoption and implementation.
2. **Ensure the strategy is community-centric and equitable:**
 - Intentionally involve long-standing community leaders and organizations in every phase of the strategy, from planning to evaluation.
 - Require racial equity impact assessments (REIAs) for all policies and programs under the strategy, following the framework outlined by the DC Justice Lab.
3. **Support and professionalize violence interrupter programs:**
 - Increase funding and resources for violence interrupter programs across all DC communities.
 - Treat violence interruption as a professional, essential public health service, ensuring fair compensation and benefits for these workers.
 - Expand training and outreach efforts to mobilize community leaders and residents in shifting norms and behaviors around violence.

Gun violence is preventable, but prevention requires bold, coordinated action. ANC 6B stands ready to support efforts to make our neighborhoods safer for all residents and urges your administration and the Council to prioritize this issue with the urgency it demands.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. Please feel free to reach out with any questions regarding this request. Frank Avery, the 2024 Chair of the ANC 6B Public Safety Committee, can be contacted at 6B01@anc.dc.gov for further discussion or clarification.

We appreciate your attention and look forward to working collaboratively to enhance public safety for all residents.

Sincerely,



Edward Ryder
2024 Chair, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B

CC:

Deputy Mayor of Judiciary and Public Safety Lindsey Appiah – Lindsey.Appiah@dc.gov

Juan Ulloa, Community Outreach Specialist, Office of the Attorney General for DC (OAG) – juan.ulloa@dc.gov

Linn Groft, Legislative & Committee Director, D.C. Council Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety - lgroft@dccouncil.gov

Frank Avery, 2024 Chair of ANC 6B Public Safety Committee and Commissioner for 6B01 – 6B01@anc.dc.gov

Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen, DC Council – callen@dccouncil.gov

Jody Kent Lavy, Vice Chair, 6B06 Resident Member and Vice Chair of the Public Safety Committee, ANC 6B – jody.kent@gmail.com