



Dear Governor Shapiro and Lieutenant Governor Davis,

We, the undersigned, advocates for safer communities across Pennsylvania, submit the following letter to express our deep disappointment and dissatisfaction with the substantial defunding of community Violence and Intervention Prevention (VIP) grants in the Pennsylvania Budget for FY2023/2024.

Pennsylvania's rural, suburban, and urban areas continue to grapple with the public health crisis of gun violence. In the last two years, firearm homicides have climbed in communities from Reading to Erie, from Allentown to Philadelphia, reaching nearly 1,000 a year.

Last year's PA Budget allocation of \$105M for FY2022/2023 provided the critical resources necessary to help us do the difficult work of keeping our communities safe. However, statewide needs far exceed available funding. A 61% reduction in VIP grants (\$65M) for FY2023/2024 will put communities throughout Pennsylvania at risk.

VIP grants provide a public health approach to reducing shootings and gun homicides by forging relationships with people at the center of gun violence in our communities. These programs support people at the highest risk of being victims or perpetrators. These programs include, but are not limited to:

- Credible messengers, who mediate disputes that could potentially lead to retaliatory shootings.
- Pre-responders who disrupt violence by keeping youth positively engaged year-round
- Hospital-based violence interruption programs engage survivors of gun violence while they're hospitalized to connect them with case managers and social service providers.
- Group violence interventions, which are collaboratives between community leaders, social service providers, and law enforcement, identify those with the highest violence risk, and intervene to provide the necessary support.
- Victim services help prevent retaliation by supporting those who've experienced violence.
- Targeted workforce development efforts that combine trauma-informed care with engaging high-risk individuals in the economy.

It is fatal to defund the critical lifeline of support communities throughout our Commonwealth desperately depend on. We need sustained investment in violence reduction programs to help realize safer communities. It is critical for state leaders to – at the least – restore the FY2023/2024 allocation to \$105M, and, ideally expand funding. Given the great demand for these services, coupled with the present gridlock within the General Assembly relating to the budget, we implore you to explore any and all options (Both executive and legislative) at your disposal to deliver the necessary resources to help us continue to keep our respective communities safe.

Sincerely,

ORGANIZATIONS

A Woman's Place
Black Clergy of Philadelphia & Vicinity
Bridges Of Opportunities
Bucks County Health Improvement Partnership
CeaseFirePA Education Fund
Chester Community Coalition
Coatesville Area Juvenile Alliance
Cookman Beloved Community
D.I.V.A.S Ministry Group Non Profit Organization
DANC
Every Murder Is Real (E.M.I.R.)
Forum Philly
Free the Ballot
Frontline Dads
Gather the People House of Prayer
Global Citizen
Hepatitis B Foundation
Hope's Beacon Baptist Church
Keystone Crisis Intervention Team
Men Who Care of Germantown Inc
Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelpphia
MITCHELL BAPTIST CHURCH
Money Talks Edu
Mothers in Charge, Inc.
Mt. Airy COGIC
Nation of Islam Coatesville Study Group
Neighborhood Resilience Project
NewView Institute
The Presytery of Philadelphia
Philadelphia Branch NAACP
Philadelphia Council of Clergy
Philadelphia Gospel Movement
Philadelphia Legacy Development/ Urbnseek
Philly Service Announcement LLC
Rose Of Sharon Women's Pastors And Ministers Conference Of Philadelphia And Vicinity Inc
SEIU 32BJ
South Pittsburgh Pittsburgh Coalition for Peace
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
The Black Political Empowerment Project/ Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence

The Center of Peace, CSL
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Violence Intervention Program
Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic
Truth and Life Empowerment Community Ministries Inc
U.D.T.J.
UNITE HERE!
UUJusticePA
Why Not Prosper
Woodland ave Community out Reach
Youth Empowerment for Advancement Hangout (YEAH Philly)

Presbyterian Church

INDIVIDUALS

Dr. Caroline Glavin, MSW, LCSW, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Dr. Julieta Calmon
Dr. Kirby Wycoff, PsyD, EdM, MPH, NCSP, Thomas Jefferson University
Dr. Chris Waanders, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Dr. Kristina Johnson, Allegheny Health Network
Dr. Joel Fein, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Loreen Evans, MSN, CCNS, R.N., CEN, TCRN, Crozier-Keystone Health Systems
Dr. Caterina Roman, Temple University

Rev. Dr. Alyn Waller, Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church
Dr. Yvonne Yates, Gather the People House of Prayer
Senior Pastor Dr. Damone Jones, Bible Way Baptist Church
Pastor Terrence Griffith
Pastor William Scott III, House of Faith Baptist United Church of Christ
Pastor Jesse Mapson, Monumental Baptist Church
Pastor Christine Coleman Crosby
Reverend Gregory Holston
Reverend Barbara Jones, Church of the Living God
Reverend Dr. Sharon McClain, Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity
Reverend Dr. Sharon Avant
Reverend Kari Olson, East Falls Presbyterian Church
Reverend Carolyn Cavness
Reverend Victor Giminez,
Reverend Juanita Walters
Reverend Quintin Robertson, United Lutheran Seminary
Reverend Jay Broadnax
Reverend Glenn McDowell, Liberti Church of the River Wards
Reverend Dr. Moses Dennis, Fairh-Immanuel Lutheran Church
Reverend Dr. Kimberley Johnson

Imam Kenneth Pilgrim-Nuriddin, Sister Clara Muhammad CDC
William Moore, Tenth Memorial Baptist Church

Jalal Black, Greater Valley Community Services
Rakeem Collins, South Pittsburgh Coalition for Peace
Julius Rivera, School District of Philadelphia
Derek Scott, CHOP Center for Violence Prevention
Mallory Stanek, Lutheran Settlement House
Cynthia Stettner, NOVA
Kimberley Sterner-Stein, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Center for Violence Prevention
Lucy Corrigan, Providence Center
Melanie Swanson, The Council of Southeast PA, Inc.