

**JEA P. STREET
COUNCILMAN, TENTH DISTRICT**



COUNCIL

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October 21, 2015

Honorable Thomas Carper, U.S. Senator
Honorable Christopher Coons, U.S. Senator
Honorable John C. Carney, U.S. Congressman
Honorable Charles M. Oberly, III, U.S. Attorney District of Delaware

Re: Public Safety for the Residents within the City of Wilmington in New Castle County District 10

Gentlemen,

I am Councilman for the 10th District of New Castle County. I have served in this capacity since November of 2004. The District includes approximately one half of the City of Wilmington and the Route 9 and 13 corridors outside the City.

In April 2005, I presented a ten point plan to reduce the violence in and around the City of Wilmington to New Castle County Council. That plan was adopted by Council and presented to the City of Wilmington for its consideration. In response to that, the former Mayor of the City established the Hope Commission. In my view, the Hope Commission essentially adopted six of my ten points and added the hope zones. The Commission was given \$500,000 from the City to implement its plan, but was destined to be the Hopeless Commission due to the absence of funding to implement its plan and fulfill its mission. While some may meritoriously argue about various successes the Hope Commission may have achieved, no one can responsibly argue that violent crime has been reduced within the City of Wilmington.

In January of 2009 at my urging, County Council directed the President of Council to send a letter to the Governor Elect requesting that a "Joint Emergency Police Task Force" be convened for the purposes of attacking the problem of gun violence, school safety and open air drug dealing. Regrettably, to my knowledge, the task force was not convened and again no one can responsibly argue that crime was reduced within the City of Wilmington as a result of this suggestion.

From October 2008 thru approximately August 2013, I served as Chairman of the Delaware Black Caucus. In that capacity, I urged with the acquiescence and support of the Caucus that the State Police be called upon to help reduce crime within the City of Wilmington. That did happen for a short period of time. However, the City of Wilmington dictated the days, times and areas of deployment for the State Police to help and in the view of many people (including myself) was that the City handcuffed the State Police to the detriment of effective help.

On Monday September 29, 2014 the U.S. Attorney General launched the Violence Reduction Network Program (VRN copy of the announcement attached) which he said would be a national comprehensive approach to reduce violent crime in communities around the country. The partnering cities announced were Camden, New Jersey; Chicago, Illinois; Detroit Michigan; Oakland/ Richmond, California and Wilmington, Delaware. One year later, I defy anyone to point to the record and show where the VRN has had any impact on reducing crime within the City of Wilmington.

To the contrary, a report on Delaware online regarding Wilmington shootings show: 104 incidents, 22 homicides and 117 victims thus far in 2015. The most recent incidents in my Council district include:

1. October 14, 2015 - Three men shot, one dies - 4th and Monroe Sts.
2. October 6, 2015 - Six year old girl shot in knee - 800 Block of Bennett St.
3. September 27, 2015 - Man shot in chest - 600 Block of N. Jefferson St.
4. September 23, 2015 - Police shoot (kill) man in wheelchair - Scott and Tulip Sts.
5. September 10, 2015 - Man shot a block from city police station - 400 block of E. Fourth St.
6. September 9, 2015 - Teen shot on Eastside - Ninth and N. Pine Sts.
7. September 7, 2015 - Man Found Fatally shot in West Center city, 600 block of w sixth St.
8. September 5, 2015 - Woman grazed in shooting - 700 block of W. Seventh St.
9. August 29, 2015 - Man shot in chest near community center - 600 block of W. Sixth St.
10. August 25, 2015 - Critically wounded victim arrives at hospital - Fifth and N. Madison Sts.
11. August 21, 2015 - Man shot in Hilltop area - 200 block of Delamore Place
12. August 19, 2015 – Man shot at Adams 4 Shopping Center - 200 block of N. Monroe St.

Most recently, as a result of the ongoing shootings in the West Center City area of the city, the West Center City Day Care Center located at Sixth and Madison Sts. is moving to a location outside the city. It is my understanding from a Board member that this is solely as a result of the shootings in close proximity to the center that compelled to the Board to deem the location that they have been in since at least 1977 unsafe for children, parents and staff.

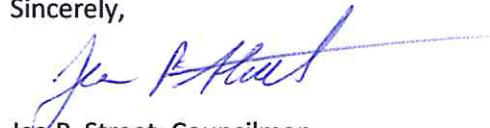
The well being of the City of Wilmington and residents of New Castle County District10 are in serious jeopardy as a result of the failure of government at all levels to address the gun violence that has plagued the city and my council district over the last twenty years. Many residents live in fear of the criminals and as a result of the fatal shooting of a man in a wheel chair by Wilmington Police, have good cause to fear the police. This is especially significant for young African American males. The relocation of the day care center is something that continues to destroy the infrastructure of a historic black

community. Many residents fear that the failure to address crime in the area of West Center City is an intentional effort to displace low income and minority residents and extend the downtown area to upper income people. In my view, the crime record gives substantive merit to the allegation.

It is for these reasons that I am requesting that you utilize all the influence you have as federal officials to urge the U.S. Department of Justice to provide the very much needed relief that the United States Attorney General promised to Wilmington, Delaware in September 2014.

I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jea P. Street", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jea P. Street, Councilman
New Castle County
10th District

Pc: Honorable Loretta E. Lynch, U.S. Attorney General
 Honorable Jack Markell, Governor, State of Delaware
 Honorable Matthew Denn, Attorney General, State of Delaware
 Honorable Dennis P. Williams, Mayor City of Wilmington
 All Honorable members of Wilmington City Council
 Honorable Thomas P. Gordon, County Executive, New Castle County Delaware
 All Honorable members of New Castle County Council

JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, September 29, 2014

Department of Justice Launches National Violence Reduction Network

Attorney General Eric Holder and Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason for the Office of Justice Programs today launched the Violence Reduction Network (VRN), a national comprehensive approach to reduce violent crime in communities around the country. The Justice Department's ability to provide intensive training and cutting-edge technical assistance will give local officials and law enforcement executives in each of the partner communities the support they need to advance anti-violence strategies.

"This new 'all-hands' approach to curbing endemic violence is founded on the recognition that our efforts are most effective when all criminal justice leaders stand united," said Attorney General Holder. "It's predicated on the notion that – although violent crime is in some ways a fundamentally local problem – it is not one that any community can meet in isolation."

The Violence Reduction Network will help localities access a broad spectrum of Justice Department resources – empowering the federal government to strengthen partnerships and collaboratively tackle persistent challenges caused by violent crime. The partnering cities announced today are Camden, New Jersey; Chicago, Illinois; Detroit, Michigan; Oakland/Richmond, California; and Wilmington, Delaware.

The VRN summit's agenda is dedicated to collaborative working sessions analyzing each city's violence challenges and discussing the variety of department resources available to address the issues. Following the summit, the department will work with police chiefs and city leaders, along with leading criminal justice researchers and practitioners, to develop effective approaches to accomplishing each city's violence reduction strategies.

"Through our partnerships with local leaders and practitioners and the wide range of resources we have available to address America's public safety challenges, the Department of Justice is putting its full support behind violence reduction efforts in these five cities," said Assistant Attorney General Mason. "I am eager to begin working with each of the sites and to help define a way forward to safer, healthier communities."

Even with reports of national violent crime decreasing, in too many communities, crime rates have remained unacceptably high, particularly in areas where social ills like poverty, unemployment, and a lack of opportunity lead to tragic circumstances in which systemic violence can easily take root.

The launch of VRN is a result of the Obama administration's continuing efforts to address violence in communities across the country. Nearly a year ago, President Obama convened a meeting at the White House with 18 mayors to discuss strategies for reducing youth violence. Following that meeting, Attorney General Holder sat down with mayors and police chiefs to talk about how the federal government can better support local efforts.

Representatives from VRN partner federal agencies include the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the United States Marshals Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Executive Office of the United States Attorneys, the Community Oriented Policing Services Office, the Office on Violence Against Women and the Office of Justice Programs.

14-1056

Office of the Attorney General

Updated October 2, 2014