

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 9, 2023

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## Lt. Gov. Austin Davis Joins U.S. Sen. Bob Casey and U.S. Rep. Dwight Evans to Announce New State Initiative to Support Victims of Gun Violence

*The Initiative Will Gather Input and Develop Recommendations for Improving Availability of Services and Resources for Survivors and Communities*

**Philadelphia, PA** – As part of National Gun Violence Awareness Month, U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, U.S. Rep. Dwight Evans and Lt. Gov. Austin Davis were in Philadelphia today to announce a state initiative to support victims of gun violence through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), which Davis chairs.

“No matter what you look like or where you live, every Pennsylvanian deserves the freedom to live in a safe community,” said **Davis**. “Every incidence of gun violence makes our streets, our neighborhoods, and our families less safe, and that’s exactly why the Shapiro-Davis budget puts more resources into violence prevention and intervention. However, it’s not just about making investments – it’s about being smart and innovative with those investments, and that’s why we’re proud to be working with Senator Casey and Congressman Evans on this new initiative.”

PCCD’s Victims’ Services Advisory Committee will lead the new Resources for Victims of Gun Violence initiative and work with stakeholders to identify existing resources, as well as gaps and recommendations for improvement over the next year. The program is modeled on proposed federal legislation by Casey and Evans, the Resources for Victims of Gun Violence Act, which would establish an interagency Advisory Council at the federal level to help all victims of gun violence – from survivors to their loved ones, coworkers, and classmates – identify and access the resources available to them to help meet a wide range of personal needs.

“While we continue to fight for commonsense measures to prevent gun violence in our communities, we owe it to survivors and their loved ones and caregivers to make sure they have the support they need to recover and move forward from gun violence,” **Casey** said. “My *Resources for Victims of Gun Violence Act* with Congressman Evans, along with Lieutenant Governor Davis’s state-level initiative, will better connect survivors, families, and caregivers to resources that support their recovery and help them manage the long-term of effects of these preventable tragedies.”

“Senator Casey and I introduced this legislation because we saw a need to better coordinate resources for victims and survivors of gun violence,” said **Evans**. “I thank Lieutenant Governor Davis for implementing this common-sense idea at the state level – in addition to helping many Pennsylvanians, I think this will show how our legislation can help victims and survivors across the country. Pennsylvania is leading the way.”

For more than three decades, the [Victims’ Services Advisory Committee](#) has set standards and provided support for Pennsylvania’s victim service programs. For this initiative, the advisory

committee will collect input from stakeholders to identify, promote, coordinate, and disseminate information, resources, and best practices to help people and communities impacted by gun violence. They will focus on ways to help gun violence victims meet basic needs, maintain their mental health and well-being, and seek legal recourse for injuries and protection for personal safety, if needed.

“With the level of violence that we’re seeing now, we need to expand our work a little wider,” said **Chantay Love**, director of EMIR Healing Center in Philadelphia. “This isn’t just about healing after the fact. It’s also about helping those who have been exposed and have never had services, so they can heal from trauma they may have witnessed years ago.”

Victim advocates and gun safety organizations were on hand for today’s announcement at the headquarters of Concerned Black Men. Representatives from local governments, organizations that provide support for victims, gun violence survivors, victim assistance professionals, as well as communities disproportionately impacted by gun violence, will play a key role in the needs assessment process.

"Every day more Pennsylvanians become gun violence survivors. While we must continue to push for life-saving solutions, we must make it as easy as possible for them to heal and access financial resources during one of the worst moments of their lives. We applaud the Lieutenant Governor’s initiative to create a clearinghouse for these programs and act as a proof of concept for Senator Casey and Congressman Evans' nationwide effort to help gun violence survivors everywhere," said **Adam Garber**, executive director of CeaseFirePA Education Fund.

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