



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Lieutenant Governor Davis and Delaware County Leaders Highlight Importance of Shapiro-Davis Administration Proposed Budget Investments to Combat Gun Violence and Make Communities Safer**

*Governor Shapiro's 2024-25 budget proposes an increase of over \$100 million to prevent and reduce gun violence across the Commonwealth.*

*Since 2021, PCCD has directly awarded more than \$10.7 million in funding to Delaware County to support projects addressing a wide range of public safety initiatives, resulting in a reduction in homicides by 29 percent county-wide between 2022 and 2023.*

**Media, PA** — Today, **Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis**, **Delaware County District Attorney Jack Stollsteimer**, legislators, local elected officials, law enforcement officials, and community groups highlighted how the Shapiro-Davis Administration's gun violence-related 2024-25 proposed budget investments are critical to addressing gun violence holistically. The Governor's budget would continue the Shapiro-Davis Administration's work to create safer communities through increased investments in several Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) programs – including those that have made an impact in Delaware County, resulting in a 29 percent reduction in homicides and an increase in the removal of illegal firearms.

"To combat the epidemic of gun violence, we need to take a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes, invests in community-based organizations working to prevent violence, and supports law enforcement agencies in keeping our communities safe," said **Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis, PCCD chair**. "In Pennsylvania, there was a 17% decrease in homicides statewide in 2023 compared to the prior year. While this is a sign of progress, this progress cannot be looked at as an end point. Instead, it is a foundation to build upon. The Shapiro-Davis budget is an important step in keeping that positive momentum going. Delaware County embodies the spirit of our proposed budget investments, by bringing together law enforcement agencies and community partners to help address gun violence in a comprehensive way."

In 2022, Delaware County had the sixth highest rate of gun violence incidents in Pennsylvania. However, between 2022 and 2023, there was a 29 percent county-wide

reduction in homicides, well above the statewide 17 percent decrease within the same timeframe. These recent reductions in violence have built on the progress Delaware County has already made in addressing gun and group-related violence, reinforcing how taking a coordinated, multi-pronged approach to public safety and providing the resources needed to execute those strategies can have a big impact.

“We are delighted to have the opportunity to publicly thank Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis and the Shapiro-Davis administration for the incredible investment that they have made in programs to reduce gun violence throughout the Commonwealth, including in our program, the Chester Partnership for Safe Neighborhoods. With a substantial investment from PCCD, we have reduced gun violence homicides by 68% in the City of Chester during the years 2020 and 2023,” said **District Attorney Jack Stollsteimer**. “We also know that the best way to reduce crime is to stop crime from happening – and that takes support for organizations doing the vital work of community building. We consider the state’s support for organizations such as Making A Change Group an equally important investment to our overall goal of reducing gun violence. Without a doubt, collaboration is the key to our success, and we are incredibly fortunate to have great partners here in Delaware County. Our partners include Delaware County Council, led by Dr. Monica Taylor, our representatives in the state legislature, Senators Tim Kearney and John Kane, and Representative Jennifer O’Mara, and we are deeply grateful for their continued support of our work. On behalf of the residents of Delaware County, I want to thank the Shapiro Administration for their many contributions to our success.”

In the last three years, PCCD has invested nearly **\$35 million** in state and federal funds to support 160 projects across Delaware County, including 23 awards totaling more than **\$10.7 million** made directly to Delaware County to support a wide range of public safety needs including improving reentry supports, addressing behavioral health concerns, and crisis intervention efforts to advance strategies to reduce gun violence and other violent crime. PCCD investments in Delaware County include:

- **\$2 million** in Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) funding to support and expand the county’s successful Group Violence Intervention program in the City of Chester, in partnership with the Chester Police Department and community-based organizations. Funds have supported hiring several “credible messengers” to intervene and connect individuals with highest risk of gun violence involvement to community-based resources, as well as technology and other supports for local law enforcement agencies.
- More than **\$1 million** in Gun Violence Investigation and Prosecution (GVIP) grant funds to expand and improve intelligence gathering, investigatory and prosecutorial tools available to detectives and attorneys in the District Attorney’s Office. Funds supported technology enhancements to improve real-time surveillance by law enforcement as well as improvements to the county’s ballistics lab to reduce wait times and increase clearance rates. Additionally, through the efforts of their gun violence task force, they have seized 850 firearms across Delaware County.

- More than **\$5.9** million to 16 police departments in Delaware County to help recruit and retain more officers, upgrade their technology and records management systems, and provide training to serve communities more effectively.

"The investments in community and violence prevention that Governor Shapiro and Lt. Governor Davis are making in Delaware County are decreasing gun violence at great rates. In partnership with our police departments and prosecutors, these prevention strategies are working, and we must sustain investment in our young people and safety," said **Senator Tim Kearney**.

"The issue of gun violence is one that has profoundly impacted my life," said **Representative Jen O'Mara**. "The work being done across Delaware County is headed in a positive direction and I look forward to continue working with the Governor, Lt. Governor, and General Assembly to ensure that these resources are available for programs with proven results, like the ones highlighted today."

"My organization, Making A Change Group, was founded with the goal of working to rebuild the Chester community which has been scarred by the effects of gun violence. Every time a crime is committed in Chester – the city where I was born and raised – the effects of that crime ripple through the community. Destroying trust is easy – restoring that trust takes hard work and commitment," said **Cory Long, Executive Director and Founder of Making A Change Group**. "With the support of PCCD, our representatives in the state legislature, County Council, and our District Attorney, MACG has been able to make progress in restoring trust by working with the young people in our community, many of whom have been deeply affected by crime. I want to thank each of you for your continued support and encouragement."

With homicides and gun violence trending down across Pennsylvania for the first time in years, it's more important than ever to continue to invest in initiatives with proven results. That's why the Shapiro-Davis Administration has proposed over \$100 million in the [2024-25 budget](#) to prevent and reduce gun violence across the Commonwealth, for the following initiatives:

- **\$37.5 million** for the [GVIP grant program](#);
- **\$37.5 million** increase for PCCD's [VIP program](#), bringing the total to \$77.5 million in state funds (up from \$40 million last year);
- **\$1 million** to stand up an [Office of Gun Violence Prevention](#) within PCCD;
- **\$1.5 million** to increase staffing at the Pennsylvania State Police to combat gun violence;
- **\$11.5 million** to create a statewide [Building Opportunity through Out of School Time \(BOOST\) program](#), to reduce community violence by providing more after-school learning opportunities for young people; and
- **\$11 million** to create more welcoming environments by building parks, addressing blight, and improving shared spaces, such as parks, streets, and playgrounds to promote safer communities.

- **\$5M** increase for the Nonprofit Security Grant Fund at PCCD, to provide resources for houses of worship, community centers, and other public spaces to equip themselves with security measures. This increase would bring the total for the program to \$10M.

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