



Lieutenant Governor
Austin A. Davis

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Contact: Kirstin Alvanitakis, kirstinalv@pa.gov

Lt. Gov. Austin Davis Calls for Continued Investments in Gun Violence Prevention Strategies at Roundtable with Local Leaders and Law Enforcement Officials

Shapiro-Davis Budget Would Invest \$100 Million to Address the Epidemic of Gun Violence and Make Pennsylvania Communities Safer

Harrisburg, PA – Lt. Gov. Austin Davis joined state and local leaders, law enforcement officials, victim advocates and community-based organizations at a roundtable conversation today in Harrisburg to highlight strategies that are working – as [Pennsylvania experienced the nation’s second-biggest decline in gun homicides last year](#) – and call for additional investments to reduce violence and make communities safer.

“Pennsylvanians deserve to be safe and feel safe, no matter what they look like or where they live, but that feeling of safety has been shattered for many people in Harrisburg and surrounding communities,” said **Lt. Gov. Davis**. “The Shapiro-Davis Administration is taking a holistic approach to addressing the epidemic of gun violence, and the strategies we’re funding – supporting law enforcement, as well as community-based organizations that help to prevent violence – are starting to see results. There is still a lot of work to be done, but we should celebrate progress. More importantly, we should keep investing in strategies that are working, so we can bring that progress to more communities.”

In February, Gov. Josh Shapiro proposed a state budget that invests \$100 million to address and prevent gun violence in Pennsylvania communities. The Shapiro-Davis budget includes an \$11.5 million investment in creating a statewide [Building Opportunity through Out of School Time](#) program, a \$1 million investment to stand up and staff an [Office of Gun Violence Prevention](#) within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and \$1 million in funding for a [Firearm Injury Prevention Program](#) within the Department of Health.

“Six years ago, the VIP grant program didn’t exist,” said **state Sen. Vincent Hughes**. “Now we see the positive impact it’s had on communities and especially our young people – now is not the time to pull back from this investment. These are funds that will

go directly to efforts at a local level to continue our progress and more community safety. Lives are being saved because of this grant program, and we must continue to ensure community groups are able to continue their impactful work.”

“PCCD plays a vital role in ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities here in Central Pennsylvania,” said **state Rep. Patty Kim**. “By supporting initiatives that prevent crime, help victims and rehabilitate offenders, PCCD works tirelessly to create a better Pennsylvania. Their efforts in promoting innovative programs, providing critical funding and fostering collaboration among law enforcement, community organizations and the public are indispensable.”

The budget also includes a \$37.5 million increase to PCCD’s Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) program. The VIP program supports a wide range of models focused on reducing violence and relies on local groups that are in tune with their communities.

In March, PCCD approved a [\\$950,000 VIP grant for the Dauphin County Commissioners](#) to support Harrisburg’s Group Violence Intervention (GVI) initiative, in partnership with the Harrisburg Bureau of Police, National Network for Safe Communities, the Dauphin County Criminal Justice Advisory Board and Dauphin County Probation and Parole.

“The gun violence that has descended upon our city every weekend has claimed far too many young lives,” said **Dauphin County Commissioner and Board Chairman George P. Hartwick, III**. “The state’s gun violence prevention initiatives focus on community-driven solutions, which is a desperately needed approach to keep our streets and our residents safe.”

While gun violence rates are still unacceptably high, several municipalities in Pennsylvania that are using evidence-backed, community-based strategies are seeing improvements.

A report by the Center for American Progress found that [Philadelphia has seen the most significant decline in gun violence per capita](#), among the nation’s biggest cities, so far this year. In addition, a recent study of the city’s GVI strategy – supported by PCCD funds – showed it was [effective in reducing shootings](#) in neighborhoods where that approach was deployed.

In York, local leaders have attributed significant reductions in gun violence to their GVI program, which has also been supported with VIP funds. Last year there was a 36 percent reduction in gun violence incidents in York City.



Lt. Gov. Austin Davis at Harrisburg roundtable; additional photos/video available at [PACast.com](https://www.pacast.com).

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