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**Lt. Gov. Austin Davis Highlights State Budget's Investments to Make Pennsylvania Communities Safer**

*Shapiro-Davis Budget Provides More Resources for Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Grants, Creates Building Opportunity through Out-of-School Time (BOOST) Program*

**Norristown, PA** – Lt. Gov. Austin Davis joined state and local leaders in Montgomery County today to highlight how the newly signed bipartisan state budget will make Pennsylvania communities safer, through more investments in violence intervention and prevention programs that are working, funding for afterschool programming and funding for an additional 400 state troopers.

“Gun violence isn’t simply a Philadelphia or Pittsburgh problem – it’s a statewide problem, including here in Montgomery County,” said **Lt. Gov. Davis**, who chairs the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). “That’s why the Shapiro-Davis Administration proposed and secured investments in our state police, funding for afterschool programs to create safe spaces for our kids, and more resources for the programs that we know are working to reduce violence. We can’t thrive as a Commonwealth if we aren’t delivering on the basic need for public safety in every neighborhood and in every community.”

Last week Gov. Josh Shapiro signed the 2024-25 state budget, which:

- Invests **\$45 million** in proven community-based programs to reduce violence through PCCD, including a **\$5 million increase** for the successful Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) program, which supports a wide range of models focused on reducing community violence and relies on community groups that are most in tune with specific local needs;
- Invests **\$11.5 million** to create a statewide Building Opportunity through Out of School Time (BOOST) program through PCCD, which will aim to reduce community violence by providing more afterschool learning opportunities for young people;
- Includes a **\$5 million increase** for the Nonprofit Security Grant Fund at PCCD, which provides resources for places of worship, community centers, and other entities to equip themselves with security measures;
- Increases funding for domestic violence services by an **additional \$2.5 million** through the PA Department of Human Services (DHS).

In addition, the Shapiro-Davis Administration will bring together law enforcement, gun violence advocates and community members to stand up Pennsylvania’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention within PCCD.

“As a Senator in a divided legislature, I’m proud of the compromise we came to in this year’s budget. It includes holistic investments into addressing the root causes of gun violence – like increasing funding for community programs, education, and violence intervention services,” said **state Sen. Amanda Cappelletti**. “But as a mom in Pennsylvania, I know we can make a bigger difference by moving evidence-based policy solutions forward, like safe storage laws, universal

background checks, waiting periods, and more. I'll continue to advocate for these proven solutions to help keep our communities safe."

In 2023, there were 22 homicides in Montgomery County, and more than three-quarters of homicides involve firearms.

While policymakers often focus on interpersonal violence when discussing gun safety, suicides are a major problem, as well. The majority of firearm deaths in Pennsylvania are suicides. In contrast to what is seen for gun violence, firearm suicides are more prevalent in rural counties than urban areas.

"Gun violence is a devastating public health issue that requires an intersectional approach, combining prevention and mental health services across all levels of government," said **Jamila H. Winder, Chair of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners**. "I commend the Shapiro-Davis administration's efforts to integrate gun violence prevention initiatives and invest in community-based programs. We must all come together – from our local communities to the entire Commonwealth – to protect our neighborhoods and prevent more tragedies."

*Additional photos/video available at [PACast.com](https://www.pacast.com).*

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