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MENTORING AND COMMUNITY-BASED SOLUTIONS TO DELINQUENCY AND YOUTH VIOLENCE IN PHILADELPHIA

JOINT HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES

OF THE

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MENTORING AND COMMUNITY-BASED SOLUTIONS TO DELINQUENCY AND YOUTH VIOLENCE IN PHILADELPHIA

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2007

U.S. SENATE, COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY, AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES, COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

The subcommittee met at 10:05 a.m. at Constitution Hall, 111 South Independent Mall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Hon. Arlen Specter, presiding. Present: Senator Casey.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ARLEN SPECTER, A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

Senator SPECTER. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. This is a joint field hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Human Services, and Education, the subcommittee which has the jurisdiction over the funding for education.

Senator Casey and I have convened this hearing to address the issue of mentoring to try to deal with the at-risk youth in the region. There is no need to recite the statistics on homicides or juvenile homicides or juvenile delinquency or juvenile arrest. Suffice it to say that in this city today there is a veritable war in progress. Very hard to walk down the streets of many sections of this city without being at risk. It is a problem which has deteriorated materially since the days when I was district attorney of this city, and there have been many, many efforts at the governmental level and at the citizen level to cope with this issue, and none, regrettably, with much success.

In talking to this issue, talking over this issue with the Governor, whom I have known many years, since he was chief of the homicide division in my district attorney's office, and with the district attorney, who I've known for many years, since he was an assistant in my office, and in discussing the matters with the school officials—the distinguished superintendent of schools, Paul Vallas, who is a witness here today—in searching for some measure, the thought arose, on the short term, that mentoring might pose some realistic chance to deal with at-risk youth.

Mentoring is an arrangement where we find an adult, or an older young person, who will take under his or her wing those in the 9- to 17-year-old category. When I was district attorney, we had a program called Take a Brother, modeled after the Big Brother program, where young people in their 17s and 18s and 19s would men-

tor somebody 11, 12, or 13. And a big part of what we are trying to do now is to bring some public focus on the mentoring approach to see if we can find volunteers. One statistic that I would like to know is an approximation of how many at-risk young people there are in this city today. And then, I would like to know how many mentors we have available to deal on a one-on-one basis with these individuals. And then, we need to know how many more mentors we need to attract. I have a sense, an instinct, that there are many people who would come forward in our community and in the outlying areas to be mentors if there was a program in existence and if there was some realistic likelihood that their efforts, in conjunction with many other efforts, would produce some response to this problem.And that is what we're going to be looking at here today.

We had an earlier meeting, on January the 19th, with Representatives from the city. The mayor was present. Governor had his representatives there. The district attorney was present. And this is the next step in what will be a continuing effort.

On the continuing resolution, which was signed into law last week, with the problems of Philadelphia in mind, we got an additional $25 million for mentoring nationwide. That, frankly, is not enough money, but, with the budget constraints, it is a start. And our city and State are eligible for competition to try to bring some of that money.

Senator Casey and I have in mind to try to bring additional funds on the appropriations process this year. And that is why we have representatives from the Judiciary Committee, Matt Minor and Lisa Owings, who have been working on this matter for a long period of time, and "Senator Bettilou Taylor," from the Appropriations Committee. I call her "Senator Taylor." She's actually the 101st Senator. She's more powerful than most Senators when you have the lead hand with her sharp pencil and the distribution of $147 billion, that's not chopped liver.

Well, I'm joined by my distinguished colleague Senator Casey today. We have the unexpected pleasure of his participation, because he was scheduled to be in Iraq today. I don't know why any intelligent young man like Senator Casey would choose Iraq over the Constitution Center; but then, he's devoted to his duty and scheduled to make the trip there on the very tough issues confronting us. But he and I had to work on Saturday. We had a vote. And that has kept him in the United States, so we're the beneficiary of that, because he is with us here today.

And I'm now very pleased to yield to my colleague.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT P. CASEY, JR., A U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

Senator CASEY. Well, Senator, thank you very much.

And I want to reiterate what—something I said at our meeting, a month ago, reiterating my gratitude, as I'm sure everyone this room is grateful, for Senator Specter's leadership on these critical issues. And I think it's emblematic of his leadership on so many issues, where he approaches an issue from the perspective of how we can improve on something that's confronting the people of Pennsylvania and the people of America. And he does it in a bipartisan way. He does it through eliciting testimony and information from

experts. And he does it in a way that shows the kind of focused leadership that he's provided.

I was thinking, today, that one of the—one of the great sound bites out there that we don't hear enough of is actually the name of a national organization. Many people here will know the name of this organization. And it says, very simply, "Fight Crime, Invest in Kids." And a lot of what we're talking about here today is gets to that basic priority, which is, unless we make the effort, here in the State and across America, to focus on children in the earliest days and months and years of their lives, all—everything after that's going to be that much more difficult—and, in some cases, impossible—to improve upon the chance that they can lead healthy and productive lives—out of jail, out of harm's way, so to speak.

So, we're—I'm grateful to be part of this. And I know that the members of both panels will contribute greatly to what my understanding is of this challenge, as well as Senator Specter's. And we want to make sure that we bring this information back to the United States Senate to develop programs not just for this State, but for programs across the country. But I'm grateful that Senator Specter has once again brought us together to focus on a problem which goes well beyond this city and well beyond this State.

So, Senator, thank you very much.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Senator Casey.

We now turn to our very distinguished panel. And our first witness is going to be the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Patrick Meehan. Patrick Meehan did not have the advantage of being an assistant district attorney in my office.

[Laughter.]

Senator SPECTER. Because he wasn't old enough.

[Laughter.]

Senator SPECTER. He didn't graduate from college—Bowdoin—until 1978. My term of DA ended in 1974. But has made up for it in the interim, holding his law degree from Temple University, and then serving as my chief of staff in the Philadelphia Senate office. And that put him in position to become district attorney of Delaware County, where he had a very distinguished tenure before being appointed to the important position of United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Meehan is an expert in the field, having initiated a program which is called the Route 22 Corridor Anti-Gang Initiative, on the crescent around the city of Philadelphia, all within his district. And I might add that we're going to be undertaking similar initiatives in Reading—we're due to be there in a few weeks—and later, in the Lehigh Valley and in Lancaster, and we may go beyond, based on what we have learned here, because this is a problem which confronts virtually every community, and as Senator Casey noted, really the entire world.

We're going to ask the witnesses to stick within the 5-minute time limit, which is the custom for the Judiciary Committee and the Appropriations Subcommittee.

And we turn the microphone over to you, Patrick.

STATEMENT OF PATRICK MEEHAN, U.S. ATTORNEY, EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. MEEHAN. Thank you, Senators. And thank you for the opportunity to speak about this important issue.

Combating violence in the neighborhoods is a top priority of United States attorneys across the Nation. And, through the Department of Justice's signature program, Project Safe Neighborhoods, my colleagues and I are coordinating efforts of Federal, State, and local law enforcement with community groups against gun crime. This includes maximizing the use of Federal laws, like the Armed Career Criminal Statutes, which you helped to write, and the Hobbs Act, to remove the most dangerous criminals from the neighborhoods, and the combat gangs and trafficking organizations. But, moreover, I previously served for 6 years as a county district attorney, and there our juvenile justice system really worked to try to deter crime through prevention efforts aimed at our most serious threat, which are at-risk juveniles with a propensity towards violence. And, therefore, I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to share with the committee some of my thoughts.

I'll focus my remarks on three outstanding programs, which include both a mentoring component and a strong law enforcement message to at-risk youth who find themselves at a crossroads. These programs are the Youth Violence Reduction Project; a second program, called Don't Fall Down in the Hood; and a third program, the Glen Mills Community Management Services Program. A common characteristic of these three programs is a focus on comprehensive intervention with young persons that are most likely to seriously harm others or to be harmed, themselves. Each seeks to deter individuals from choices that increase their exposure to harm, while promoting accountability, responsibility, and personal development. Each attempts to show dangerous juveniles there's an alterative to violence and a future beyond crime.

The first is the Youth Violence Reduction Project. I'll speak the least about that, because another colleague will talk about it today, but it provides intensive support with graduated sanctions for noncompliance for youths age 24 and younger who are at the greatest risk of killing or being killed. The results have been particularly promising here in the city, where it's been instituted through the district attorney's office. According to that office, when a comparison was made of homicides in three police districts for the years just prior to the initiation of this program, the results have been significant. For youth 24 and under, homicides decreased 46 percent in the 24th Police District, 48 percent in the 25th, and 9 percent in the short tenure that it's been in work in the 12th District.

A second program is Don't Fall Down in the Hood. It's a program offered by the Institute for the Advancement of African-American Youth. It's a city-funded program that works with juvenile offenders ages 14 to 18—again, much of our target group—and after their first arrest for narcotics or assault or firearms or other offenses. The ultimate goal is to reduce the criminal behavior of the offenders while showing them how to take advantage of meaningful opportunities in the community. The teens are referred to the program mostly from the Philadelphia Family Court and the Youth Study Center. As part of the program, students receive presen-

tations from professionals to educate them about life-and-death decisions. According to Archie Leacock, the executive director, Don't Fall Down in the Hood has included more than 860 youths. Only 7 percent have committed an offense after completion of the program.

The third program is the Community Management Services at the Glen Mills School. It provides a strong component of aftercare. This provides reintegration services for court adjudicated juveniles who are returning to a community after completing a residential commitment. Like adult prisoners after incarceration, they face unique pressures and tough choices upon a return to their neighborhoods. Juveniles participate in creating a transition plan, are supervised by—face-to-face up their reintegration. They receive assistance in school reentry, employment search, individual counseling, family meeting, and even a 24-hour crisis intervention, if that is necessary. Pre-adjudication and truancy services are also part of this model.

Let me conclude my testimony by observing that intensive intervention is a critical component of antiviolence efforts, but other longer-term interventions play a vital role in keeping our communities safe. For example, antitruancy programs that that identify chronically truant juveniles, and reestablish them in age-appropriate remedial education, are a proven deterrent to crime. Former Mayor Wilson Goode and the Amachi Program are a great example.

Unmarried teenage mothers and their children are often the greatest risk of becoming entrenched in the lifestyle of poverty and family dysfunction. The Nurse/Family Partnership is an intervention program which deals with support, education, and counseling.

Let me conclude by saying, law enforcement is one critical piece of a solution to the problems of crime and violence, but a comprehensive approach, which includes interventions like the kinds I've mentioned today, increase the capacity we have to keep our neighborhoods safe and to steer young people away from bad choices before it's too late.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Meehan appears as a submission for the record.]

Senator SPECTER. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Meehan.

We now turn to the leading authority in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on this subject, and that is Dr. Gerald Zahorchak, who's the Secretary of Education, which has the responsibility for implementation of Federal and State programs aimed at abating youth violence and gangs. Dr. Zahorchak is a graduate of St. Francis, a master's degree from Indiana University, a Ph.D. from Penn State.

Thank you for joining us today, Dr. Zahorchak, and we look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF GERALD ZAHORCHAK, SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. ZAHORCHAK. Thank you, Senator. And thanks for the work that you're doing at the national and local levels in this area. We're very grateful to have the opportunity to speak to you today.

I thought that—I want to tell you that, while I believe that most schools are, indeed, safe places, and have been made safer in recent years, we have a lot of work to do to improve school safety. And I'd like to address, specifically, the important issue of student gang involvement.

In Pennsylvania, we've learned that using student assessment data to identify the causes of student academic problems is the same type of model that we want to use in learning about the root causes of student behavioral problems.

Today, in Pennsylvania, we're experiencing success in raising student achievement in every grade level, in every content area. Nowhere is that success more impressive than in our lowest-performing schools. Pennsylvania's schools that have less than half of their students' population scoring proficient on our State test in 2001 have experienced double-digit growth increases in proficient scores at every grade level in every demographic group, including race, family income, language ability, and IEP status. In Pennsylvania, we know our success has resulted from our relentless focus on examining student achievement data and asking serious questions not only about the student achievement, but about the educational practices that are most likely to have a positive impact on students in a particular classroom in which we increase the level of intervention in a school, depending upon the severity of a school's needs.

So, we line up our efforts, in terms of foundation efforts, what we can give to support all schools as they continuously grow, targeted support to intervene where schools need help, and then very intensive support for the districts that need corrective action.

Since school safety concerns encompasses such a broad spectrum, I'd like to look at gang topics. And, in the testimony, you'll see that the description of gang factors by—and risk—gangs and risk factors—by sociologists determine or define what a "gang" means, but typically it's a group of kids who identify with each other. Sometimes they fight for claim of a neighborhood territory or use common symbols. But the—and also perhaps engage in illegal activities. All students are at moderate to severe risk of being influenced by gangs, gang activities, or risky behavior, in general.

In responding to that, we think about it in terms of prevention and intervention first. And when we think about prevention, we think about helping schools understand what they can do to promote resiliency, giving kids opportunities, giving young people opportunities to have high expectations academically and behavioral wise, to be meaningfully engaged, to have opportunities to bond with each other, to understand clearly the rules of the school and the consequences, and see consistent supports for successful behavior, and consequences that are supported for non-good—for not-so-successful behavior. So, our students have a resiliency from—in terms of meaningful engagement, clear and consistent boundaries, as well as setting the high expectations.

We also teach life skills, as well as have unconditional support for our students. We think those five or six elements really do provide the prevention efforts. And we help schools understand ways to get about looking for root causes through serious training. In general, Pennsylvania has undertaken many steps to increase our

school violence prevention efforts. We're working closely with the Pennsylvania State Police, the Emergency Management Agency, the Commission on Crime and Delinquency to support schools in creating comprehensive safety plans, and reviewing internal programs for prevention.

As you know, in Pennsylvania schools are not only required to have a safety plan, but to submit it to the Department every year, and with a summary of their school safety data. We collect and publish, on our Web site, school-by-school reports on violence incidents, and we also provide serious technical assistance from places such as our Centers for Safety Schools, our Annual Safety Schools Conference, and small limited safety grants. In addition, in collaboration with our partners at the Juvenile Justice Commission and Department of Public Welfare, the Department introduced a stronger, more aligned, approach and response to truancy which includes a new policy statement, effective practices, resources, and strategies that can be used by all stakeholders, especially students and their families.

Our goal in Pennsylvania is to see all students succeed and ready for postsecondary education or a career, regardless of background or circumstances. It's our partnership with public welfare, the Governor's—Children's Commission and others that we're building the resiliency framework for schools to build protective factors for all schools, although we continuously ask our schools to improve their practices and implement an aligned, systematic approach to preventing school violence, we acknowledge the importance of sufficient resources to support our work.

Last year, Pennsylvania suffered at 20-percent decrease in Safe and Drug-Free Schools——

Senator SPECTER. Dr. Zahorchak, how much more time will you need?

Mr. ZAHORCHAK. Just 30 seconds.

Senator SPECTER. Go ahead.

Mr. ZAHORCHAK. Thanks, Senator.

We've experienced the decrease of 20 percent in our Safe Schools grant. It's had a negative effect on our school, and we're concerned that the President has asked Congress to—for continued reductions and elimination of these funds.

Our schools and communities have to examine the root causes of the students' behavioral problems, in the same we do examine our academic problems.

We thank you for giving us the opportunity today to be at this——

[The prepared statement of Mr. Zahorchak appears as a submission for the record.]

Senator SPECTER. Thank you. Thank you very much, Dr. Zahorchak.

Mr. ZAHORCHAK. Thanks, Senator.

Senator SPECTER. We now turn to Mr. Peter Ramos, who is the managing director of the city of Philadelphia. That job entails the management of all of the departments. Previously, he had been city solicitor here. And before that, he was a vice president at the University of Pennsylvania, in charge of their outreach program, which gave him considerable experience directly in this field. He's a grad-

uate of the University of Pennsylvania, and magna cum laude from the University of Michigan.

Thank you for being with us today, Mr. Ramos, and we look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF PEDRO RAMOS, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Mr. RAMOS. Good morning, Senators. On behalf of Mayor John F. Street, thank you, Chairman Specter and Senator Casey, for giving me the opportunity to testify here today.

Mr. Chairman, your commitment to addressing the issue of youth violence is demonstrated not only by your words, but by your actions, such as holding hearings like this one today, and providing the leadership to obtain funding to support this city's violence initiatives, like the Youth Violence Reduction Partnership.

We all continue to struggle with the challenge of addressing the growing problem of violence and the devastating effects it has our community, especially our youngest citizens. Violence is shattering the dreams and futures of too many children and youth in our city. A comprehensive and communitywide strategy is needed to address this growing violence. The Street administration has invested heavily in violence prevention programs, and there is no more important priority for this administration than the safety and stability of our children and youth.

A significant component of our comprehensive violence reduction strategy is mentoring. My testimony will focus on how current violence reduction efforts—specifically, YVRP, which has been tied to significant decreases in youth homicide rates, and the Adolescent Violence Reduction Partnership—utilize mentoring as a key component of their approaches.

Although we are seeing positive trends in the reduction of many major crimes, there has been recent growth in violence among youth ages 18 to 24. The number of arrests for violence crimes increased by 1 percent between 2004 and 2005. The number of arrests for homicide increased by 4 percent between 2004 and 2005. The number of arrests for rape increased by 3 percent between 2004 and 2005.

One of the city's most notable research-based violence-reduction strategies is YVRP, which is active in five of the city's 24 police districts. This proven model targets youth who are most likely to kill or be killed, and provides them with intensive supervision, mentoring, and support services. YVRP is a partnership among the Philadelphia Police Department, adult and juvenile probation, the district attorney's office, the managing director's office, the Department Of Human Services, Recreation, Behavioral Health, as well as other partner agencies, both public and private.

The young people enrolled in the program are known as "youth partners." And the paraprofessionals who deliver many of these services include—including mentoring, are known as "streetworkers." The essential elements of YVRP, each of which I will describe in detail, are identification, surveillance, graduated sanctions, positive supports, including mentoring, and gun suppression.

Identification: YVRP utilizes research-based indicators to identify youth 14- or 16-to-24 who are most at risk to kill or be killed.

Surveillance: Streetworkers, police, and probation officers provide intensive supervision, usually daily, to monitor the youth partners, wherever they are, in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods.

Third, graduated sanctions: When a participating youth violates his or her probation, YVRP swiftly imposes sanctions. Research has demonstrated that the prompt deployment of sanctions can be a key element in deterring further criminal behavior.

Fourth, positive supports and mentoring: Sanctions alone are not enough to deter youth people from criminal behavior. YVRP streetworkers help youth partners access a range of positive supports, including educational opportunities, literacy, job placement, and drug treatment.

A key component of job placement and—a key component of positive supports is the mentoring relationship between streetworkers and youth partners. Streetworkers are from the same neighborhoods and have similar backgrounds as the youth partners. This shared context and experience creates a strong bond between the streetworker and the youth partner, increasing the effectiveness of the streetworker.

And finally, gun suppression. YVRP is working with local, State, and Federal authorities to deter both access to, and use of, firearms by young people.

YVRP was first introduced in the 24th Police District in 1999, and has since expanded to a total of five police districts. Since its inception, approximately 2,100 youths have been part of YVRP.

Given that target population, it is clear that YVRP has saved many lives. Through December 2006, only 1.3 percent of YVRP youth partners—and I believe that's a total of 22 youth partners—have either died or been accused of murder. While a single death is too many, the data clearly demonstrate the success we have had mentoring 98.7 percent of our youth partners who were at highest risk of killing or being killed.

YVRP has been subjected to rigorous third-party validation, and the results are promising, according to research conducted by public/private ventures in the police—in the three police districts where YVRP was implemented long enough for evaluation. My written comments have a summary of that analysis.

I'm going to jump ahead, to say that, given the success of YVRP with 16- to 24-year-olds, and the reports of growing violence among younger youth, it is logical that this initiative be driven down to younger youth, lifetime at-risk young offenders between 10 and 12 years of age. The Philadelphia Story, a briefing paper published by Philadelphia Safe and Sound, documents that we know how to identify youth at younger ages who are likely——

Senator SPECTER. Mr. Ramos, how much——

Mr. RAMOS [continuing]. To kill or be killed——

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. How much more time will you need?

Mr. RAMOS. Less than 30 seconds.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you.

Mr. RAMOS. And we're doing just that, through the Adolescent Violence Reduction Partnership. AVRP is designed to intervene

with 10- to 15-year old youth at the first sign of serious risk behaviors, and connect them with streetworkers, and provide support services to help them redirect their lives before becoming victims or perpetrators.

For both YVRP and AVRP, the streetworker naturally takes on a role of mentor to the youth, encouraging him or her to make positive choices for the future. Natural mentors have been demonstrated to be a positive influence for at-risk youth, a finding that is validated by the success of the YVRP program.

Thank you, Senator Specter.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ramos appears as a submission for the record.]

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Ramos.

We now turn to Police Commissioner Sylvester Johnson, who has risen through the ranks, some four decades of service in the uniform of the policeman. When he was the Headquarters Investigative Unit head at Hunting Park, he arranged for the unit to adopt the Thomas Mifflin School. And to encourage officers to provide counseling and direction to the youngsters in that school may well be a model for the future, Commissioner Johnson, which we'll come to in the question-and-answer session. But, for now, we thank you for coming, and we turn to you for your testimony.

STATEMENT OF SYLVESTER JOHNSON, POLICE COMMISSIONER, CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Commissioner JOHNSON. Good morning, Senator Specter and Senator Casey.

First, I want to thank you for inviting me to this hearing on delinquency and youth violence. As you can tell by this panel, the subject is critically important to the citizens, to the city as a whole. As a government, we must come together to protect our children from violence, but, just as important, from resorting to violence. There is no higher duty for me personally, and for all government, so I thank you for allowing me to be part of this proceedings.

At the beginning, let me state clearly, I believe that law enforcement should be the last step in protecting our children. I say this, because by the time a child comes to the attention of the police, the damage may already be done. I strongly believe we need to address the social failures that cause children to resort to crime and violence. We need to address the factors that create such hopelessness and lack of respect in our children.

Obviously, I don't have all the answers. But what I do know is that many children that become victims, criminals, or both, come from broken homes. Sometimes there are no parents at all, the parents are in jail or they're addicted to drugs. Is it any surprise that children turn to violence and crime themselves?

Everyone agrees we need to target these children at risk of becoming victims or killers, and the YVRP is an outstanding partnership among government agencies that does just that. In fact, John Delaney, from the District Attorney's Office, was the founding partner of that program, and I commend him for all the hard work that he's done. But, regrettably, we find that—violence often getting children younger and younger. The VRP was originally designed to target—address children from 14 to 24. But we have children as

young as 9 and 10 becoming victims and killers, as well. So, the VRP has spun off another program called Adolescent Violence Reduction Program to address those youth at risk, age 8 and—old.

Let me state clearly, if we believe in and support these programs, they save lives, plain and simple, but I must state the children in these programs have been targeted because they have already been involved with the police or been victims. What we truly need is less children targeted for intervention. We need to work together as a community to give our children the love, compassion, support, and guidance every child craves. This will take strong leaders in government who are willing to invest in programs that will not provide immediate results.

The problem with our children did not occur overnight, nor will the solution. We need to explore innovative ways to instill the hope and self-worth into our children that'll last a lifetime. Historically, this was the role of the family. The family, as we know, is—no longer exists for far too many of our children. So, we must explore alternate plans that would provide the nurturing environment every child requires. I believe that social failures at this point in the child's life are where the violence and delinquency begins. As I said at the beginning, there's no higher duty for government than protecting our children, but I believe law enforcement should be the last line of defense. The first line of defense is finding a way to create a caring and supportive environment for each and every child in Philadelphia.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Johnson appears as a submission for the record.]

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Johnson.

Our next witness is Mr. John Delaney, who is the deputy district attorney. Previously, he had served as the chief of the juvenile section. He's a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, and law degree from Villanova, and specializes, in his current position, on juvenile violence.

Thank you for being with us today, Mr. Delaney, and we now turn to you.

STATEMENT OF JOHN DELANEY, DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY FOR THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Mr. DELANEY. Thank you, Senator. Good morning.

Senator Specter, Senator Casey, as you now, I am here on behalf of District Attorney Lynn Abraham, who's on a previously scheduled trip outside the city. She and I appreciate, Senator Specter your longstanding commitment to the safety of the citizens of our city, and thank you for the opportunity to offer our thoughts today.

I want to add a couple of comments about the Youth Violence Reduction Partnership.

You've heard from Mr. Meehan and Mr. Ramos about some of this program. There are a couple of things that they didn't touch on that I think are important to recognize. One is that the YVRP has been data-driven. I serve, along with Naomi Post, as the co-chair of the YVRP Steering Committee. And YVRP started in the 24th District, because that was the section of the city that had one sector that was the most violent for young people. We define

"young people" as age 24 and under. YVRP has expanded, over the last 7 years, to four additional districts, driven each time by how many people were killed in that district, how many young people were killed, how many young people were shot, how many young people are on probation. So, YVRP has been data-driven.

Second, YVRP is a true partnership. Managing Director Ramos mentioned the city agencies that participate, but it's also important to note that we partner with the school district, with Philadelphia Safe and Sound, and with public/private ventures. So, there are a number of agencies brought to the table, any of whom can contribute to the partnership, whether it's by their resources or their expertise.

The third characteristic of YVRP that I think it's critically important to mention, especially now, is, we focus on juveniles and young adults. In our data, we learned that only 2 percent of Philadelphia is between the ages of 18 and 24—young adults—but 22 percent of the homicide victims are between the ages of 18 and 24, and 40 percent of the alleged murderers are between 18 and 24. So, I would strongly encourage you and your colleagues to consider this when trying to create funding programs for mentoring for our most at-risk youth. Having been the deputy of the juvenile division in the DA's office, and like Mr. Meehan, I, too, suffer from having been born too late to work for you, Senator Specter, but District Attorney Abraham has continued your tradition——

Senator SPECTER. We might give you another chance.

[Laughter.]

Mr. DELANEY [continuing].—District Attorney Abraham has continued your tradition of being a zealous courtroom advocate for safety, but also viewing her role as much greater than that: that of a public servant.

And in looking at what we have done over the years, I served for a number of years in our juvenile division. Now I head up our trial division. There's a rich spectrum of services available for juvenile delinquents. Not as rich as it should be, but a very rich spectrum. That spectrum shrinks considerably once the offender reaches his 18th birthday. And, unfortunately for us in Philadelphia 18- to 24-year-olds are the gravamen, the source, the focus of our problem, in terms of young people and violence.

So, I'd ask you to consider that, in funding programs, that there be flexibility included, if at all possible, to allow for funding of supportive services to people 18 to 24. It's because of the intensive support, and the intensive supervision that YVRP couples, that YVRP has shown success in Philadelphia.

Senator Specter, we appreciate your support. Your staff has been to YVRP meetings. Your staff has joined us on targeted patrol. YVRP costs about $1.6 million per police district. That's because, as Commissioner Johnson alluded to, these young people have spent their lives getting enmeshed in situations that are very difficult to disentangle. Their lives are filled with challenges. It's only through intensive support and intensive supervision that we have an opportunity to get those young folks, in the words of the YVRP mission statement, to be alive at 25, to make it to their 25th birthday.

We thank you for your ongoing assistance.

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Delaney.

We now turn to the distinguished chief executive officer of the Philadelphia school system, Paul Vallas. Came to Philadelphia in 2002. Previously, he had been the CEO of the Chicago school system, the third largest in the Nation, and turned it from a national reputation of one of the worst to a model system. Superintendent Vallas has been very deeply involved in the issues of juvenile violence, and has found that dealing with that issue in the school system is an indispensable prerequisite to getting young people ready for the education process.

Thank you for your service and for being here today, Superintendent Vallas, and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF PAUL VALLAS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

Mr. VALLAS. Well, thank you so much. I'd also like to congratulate you and thank you, Senator Specter. I'm fortunate that I was born young enough to have had an opportunity to work with you and to benefit from your leadership and your wisdom and guidance. In many ways, I consider you to be the conscience of the United States Senate, in so many ways. And we work—we look forward to working with Senator Casey on future issues to benefit the children of Philadelphia.

Let me talk about what works. The Youth Violence Reduction Partnership and the Adolescent Violence Reduction Partnership, which targets even younger children, it works and needs to be brought to scale. There is absolute—the data is there; it supports it. And, as pointed out, it's extraordinarily cost-effective.

School-based community policing is the most effective program at the local school level for reducing violence in and around the schools. But we've seen about a 20- close to 28-percent reduction in serious incidents on and in our schools because of our community-based policing initiative.

The Parent Truant Officer Program is the most effective program for getting kids off the street. Where we've had parent truant officers present, working in the schools, we've had an increase in enrollment, an increase in attendance, we've had an increase in test scores. And we're currently working with the city to try to bring that program to scale.

The biggest problem we face, youth violence has a direct connection with the dropout problem. I think close to 80 percent of the homicides are either—are committed by individuals who have, in fact, dropped out. We just recently provided data to the city and to Councilman Goode on this particular problem. So, if we get kids in school, and we keep them in school, crime's going to decline. All you need to do is to visit the jails and to look at the jackets of those who have been incarcerated to see that education failure seems to be followed by crime.

The three highest dropout rates are among students who are incarcerated or put in detention centers or put in AUDI homes, or your disciplinary homes; students who are pregnant constitute the second highest percentage of dropouts, 70 percent; and students who are overaged underachievers. And, as you know, we have this wonderful law in Philadelphia that says you don't have to start

school until you're 8 years old, and—which means a lot of parents take that literally, and it's not like the kids have been homeschooled. So, obviously, initiatives that target those three categories will have an immediate impact.

Alternative schools for students who are incarcerated allow us to reach those kids, and to give those kids a second chance. Where we have our alternative schools, they're working very effectively, in terms of attendance, in terms of giving students an opportunity to get back into school, get back into the mainstream. A program called the Cradle to the Classroom Program, which identifies pregnant teens and assigns pregnant teens a mentor and a trainer to make sure babies are born healthy and put in daycare, and mentors the pregnant teens to get them back into school, has been phenomenally successful. Pregnant teens who have been through this program are four times more likely to graduate, and their children, by the time they reach third grade, you don't see an achievement gap. And, in transitional schools for overaged underachieves, so we can get those 14- and 15- and sometimes 16-year-old middle-grade kids out of the middle schools, believe it or not, and into the transition—into transition schools, because that constitutes our—the highest—the third highest percentage of dropouts, the third highest category of dropouts, in terms of percentages.

I think, overall, though, if we're going to keep kids in school, I believe that we have to change the dynamic and the expectations. Time magazine's recent piece, special edition called "Dropout Nation," looked at the dropout problem nationwide, talked about the direct links between dropouts and crime, and said that there are two principal reasons why people drop out. The children do not see college as an option, because they come from families who have never had anyone attending college, or—and/or children to not see college as a financial option, they believe that college is financially beyond their reach. So, as a result, there's no interest to really focus on high school, to do well in high school, to succeed in high school. And, likewise, that contributes to underachievement at the middle grade levels, because, again, it's—the high school is kind of seen as a dead end, and high school is not seen as a vehicle for achieving something else.

And obviously, counseling and mentoring can help change that dynamic, but ultimately we need to make a stronger connection between college, and we need to make a stronger connection—and we need to guarantee children that, if they get through high school, college is, indeed, an option.

So, what we've begun to look at in Philadelphia is linking college—linking high school to college through programs like dual enrollment, through programs like early college. We're piloting a number of programs right now with some of our poorest-performing schools, that, in effect, guarantee high school seniors that, their senior year, they will be enrolled in college, taking dual courses; in some cases—at Northeast High School, about 100 kids are actually taking almost a full freshman load, and it's having a dramatic impact. We have children from Germantown attending such a program.

And then, secondly, guaranteeing children employment opportunities before they graduate high school, as an incentive to keep

them in high school, particularly work-study. It's great to do counseling, but when you incorporate counseling into work-study, it can have a dramatic impact, too. So, what we're piloting in Philadelphia is a program that allows students to go to school and to work at the same time, and to earn elective credits through work-study programs. I cite, just to close, the Cristo Rey model in Chicago that has gotten some national attention, where the children are actually going to school 4 days a week, and working 1 to 2 days a week. And, obviously, they use that income to help pay for their high school tuition at one of Chicago's more prestigious parochial schools. But it's a 99-percent-poverty school, and yet they have a 95-percent dropout rate. So, changing the dynamics and changing expectations, we think, can go a long way.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Vallas appears as a submission for the record.]

Senator SPECTER. Mr. Vallas, we now turn to the questions from Senator Casey and myself. Let begin with you. On the subject you just talked about, the dropouts, what assistance could the Federal or State or city governments be to formalize programs where the colleges would work with, say, the Philadelphia school system to provide the incentives to high school seniors to finish school or, as you characterize it, the work-study program, to work with employers to mesh with the high school seniors?

Mr. VALLAS. Well, let me say that——

Senator SPECTER. Let me start with a question. Are there any formalized programs now in either of those two directions?

Mr. VALLAS. The State has been slowly bringing to scale a dual-enrollment subsidy program that gives schools——

Senator SPECTER. That gets the subsidy——

Mr. VALLAS [continuing]. Partial——

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. For whom?

Mr. VALLAS. For dual enrollment. For the high schools themselves. So, in other words, if students are enrolled in college courses while they're in high school, the State——

Senator SPECTER. How do we—how do we motivate the college? It seems to me that's the motivation line.

Mr. VALLAS. Well, one of the ways you can motivate them is—obviously, schools that are receiving State and—State and Federal subsidies should—could be encouraged to set aside a number of slots for dual enrollment. Let me give you an example. In the Philadelphia metropolitan area, there are more degreed—students in degreed programs than there—college programs—than there are kids in the Philadelphia public schools. There's something like 236,000. So, if all the universities, colleges, and institutions would set aside, maybe, 2 percent of their seats for an early college program at reduced tuition costs, tuition costs that are aligned with what we, in effect, pay to educate that senior if that senior was, in effect, taking the same courses that——

Senator SPECTER. Superintendent Vallas let me interrupt——

Mr. VALLAS [continuing]. Could have an impact.

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. You, because the time——

Mr. VALLAS. Yes.

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. Time is short. I'd ask you to supplement your oral testimony——

Mr. VALLAS. Absolutely.

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. Here today, and respond to a series of questions.

One, what specific programs, perhaps by way of tax credit or tax incentives, might the Federal Government utilize to get employers to tie in to high school seniors?

And, similarly, what kind of incentives might be provided to universities to tie in?

And, third, a subject we can't go into any detail, but something you and I have discussed at some length, and that is the number of at-risk students you have where you know who they are——

Mr. VALLAS. Uh-huh.

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. And you probably have the most intimate contact with them, on a variety of indicia, dropping out——

Mr. VALLAS. Yes.

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. Attitudes in schools. And what kind of a program within the school, directed solely there, would be useful?

Mr. VALLAS. Okay.

Senator SPECTER. As you know, we've been successful in getting very substantial additional sums to the Philadelphia——

Mr. VALLAS. Yes, you have.

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. School district through the appropriations process. And Senator Casey and I would be interested to see if we could target that.

Director Ramos, let me turn to you on a question of whether we might look for some targeted funding outside of the regular channels. We know the shortages of discretionary spending at the Federal level, and the squeeze at the State level and the city budget. Private parties have undertaken to finance a cleanup of the Center City area, because it is in their financial interest to do so, with the funds coming from local merchants. What might be explored to try to get voluntary help, maybe from foundations or from citizens, to a fund which would be directed solely at the programs we've talked about here, the Youth Violence Reduction Program, they mentoring issue, with an appeal which could be jointly framed from the Governor, the mayor, Senator Casey and myself, and others? What do you think of the possibilities of creating such a fund?

Mr. RAMOS. Senator, I'm sure that the mayor and the administration would want to pursue that jointly with you, and this—and representatives of the State. We have—at least with respect to Youth Violence Reduction partnership—we're, as you've heard, in four areas, in five districts—one of the things that perhaps makes that a more achievable goal is—we don't think we need a YVRP in each police district. We believe that going to scale with YVRP is probably going into a total of about nine school districts—about nine police districts, at a cost of about 1.6——

Senator SPECTER. And what would that cost?

Mr. RAMOS [continuing]. About $1.6 million per district. With respect to AVRP, we have been funding——

Senator SPECTER. So, we're talking about nine times 1.6, or about $14 million.

Mr. RAMOS. Of—in the aggregate, including those areas that are currently funded through Federal earmark, as well as State grants.

On the YVR—on the AVRP program for children 10 to 15, we've been funding it primarily from Department of Public Welfare, and are funded at—not funded to have the program at scale, although we've been taking the program——

Senator SPECTER. Director Ramos——

Mr. RAMOS [continuing]. To scale——

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. How does the program work, where private parties contribute to a fund to keep the streets clean in the Center City area?

Mr. RAMOS. Well, in that particular example, there's, by local legislation, a special services district created that assesses the Center City businesses and funds those special services. There are other models that—where the business community, in the past, for example, around public education, has come together and contributed to a charitable fund controlled by the business community. So, there are a number of different models out there.

Senator SPECTER. They've joined together to control—create a fund.

Mr. RAMOS. And I guess one final thing, Senator, that I would point out, in fairness to the—to all the nonprofit social-service organizations in this city, is that a lot of the front-line service in both YVRP and AVRP, in this—particularly streetworkers, slash, mentors—are done by people employed by community-based nonprofit organizations, who themselves are charitable organizations, and at—to some extent, are probably subsidizing some of this, because it's——

Senator SPECTER. Director Ramos——

Mr. RAMOS [continuing]. A core mission for them.

Senator SPECTER. I would like you to follow up your testimony today and give some thought to whether we might create a voluntary fund. Keeping the streets safe is really a higher priority than keeping the streets clean. We like to have clean streets, but I think we'd like better to have safe streets.

U.S. Attorney Meehan, you have gotten an allocation of $2.5 million for the Route 222 Project. Tell us what good use you've made it to give us an incentive to provide some more Federal funding for you there.

Mr. MEEHAN. Senator, that has had—that has had three components to it. There's been a law enforcement component, but there has also been critical involvement in two other aspects. First, the prevention. We've worked with mayors from five cities to identify how they can utilize this money, frankly, just to serve as a steppingstone to identifying their at-risk youth, and then seeing what they have in their community that can be supplemented to intervene with the at-risk youth before they embark on a life of crime. You've seen almost every person here discuss the idea that we can identify those kids that are the most likely to carry out the criminal activity. What we try to do is work with the resources that exist in that community, supplement them, and then make a match between those at-risk kids and the community-based organizations.

Senator SPECTER. Has the program——

Mr. MEEHAN. A second——

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. Been going on long enough to show any tangible results?

Mr. MEEHAN. No. We have only begun these processes. We've—as is often the case, it's the law enforcement piece which is out in front. We've had some very big takedowns of the gangs. And I might focus on the fact that we're looking at kids who may be identifying with gangs. So, the focus is exclusively on preventing gang identification in the neighborhoods and in the schools. Many of the kids who are carrying out the violence may not, all the time, be gang-associated. So, what we're talking about today is a little bit apart.

I want to focus, as well, on the aftercare piece. This is—we have a piece, that talks about individuals who are returning from incarceration, which is part of our aftercare. But it's just as significant in the juvenile context particularly maybe even more significant, which is why I talked about the Glen Mills program. While it's not something that has been broadly followed around the area, I think it has tremendous promise, because we spend a lot of time already on kids that are at risk, who have been sent to juvenile facilities, then they return to their communities, already having had some benefit of stabilization while they've been in that facility, but they return to the streets, and they're left without the kind of continuing guidance and oversight that may help them return more effectively back to the school-based situation or——

Senator SPECTER. Well, what's your suggestion?

Mr. MEEHAN [continuing]. Even——

The funding for programs, like the Glen Mills program, that recognize that, after we have people in our juvenile facilities, much as Paul Vallas had said, we want to take advantage of that to return them, first, to school, if possible, in an age-appropriate way, or with—to some sense of involvement in——

Senator SPECTER. Mr. Meehan——

Mr. MEEHAN [continuing]. Employment or a community——

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. Because of the shortage of time, would you supplement your answer by giving us a short memo on the Glen Mills project——

Mr. MEEHAN. Yes, I will, Senator.

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. How it works and why you think it's been successful?

Mr. MEEHAN. Yes, Senator.

Senator SPECTER. Dr. Zahorchak, the law of the State of Pennsylvania doesn't require a child to attend school until 8. That seems like an archaic provision, especially with all of the modern studies which have shown that the earlier years are more determinative on development. What efforts have been made to change that law?

Mr. ZAHORCHAK. Well, we've—on a couple of occasions, have asked the legislature to change the law. In our school code bill, we've asked to make it at least age 6. We've been unsuccessful at doing that, so we, you know, need to get the support from——

Senator SPECTER. What's the problem in getting it changed?

Mr. ZAHORCHAK. It seems that there's support for not mandating from the State a choice that a parent would make. We don't believe

that. We believe that it's a good idea to make an earlier start as part of——

Senator SPECTER. Is there an objection from the rural part of the State, where they might have a little different circumstance than the city considerations?

Mr. ZAHORCHAK. There could be. There is objections, where——

Senator SPECTER. Have you tried the—leaving it to local option?

Mr. ZAHORCHAK. Well, today we've not introduced anything that would say compulsory education would be a local choice to start it before 8. Policies could be made. We have not done that. We've tried to make a sweeping rule, changed from 6 to 8. We——

Senator SPECTER. Well, it seems to me that that's a pretty glaring problem, not——

Mr. ZAHORCHAK. It's——

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. To have that requirement in the city of Philadelphia.

Commissioner Johnson, what age would you like to see children required to go to school?

Commissioner JOHNSON. Well, you know, as far as I'm concerned, this is—going by the experts, and these are two experts here, as far as education is concerned, and I'm not——

Senator SPECTER. Well, come on, Commissioner Johnson, you take 'em off the street, out of your bailiwick and give 'em to Superintendent Vallas. What age?

Commissioner JOHNSON. Okay. I think that 6 or 7 would be the appropriate age to take the—

Senator SPECTER. How about—6 or 7, that's too vague—how about 5?

Commissioner JOHNSON. Six, Senator.

[Laughter.]

Senator SPECTER. Well, we've made a little progress.

[Laughter.]

Commissioner JOHNSON. Okay.

Senator SPECTER. Commissioner Johnson, I note what you have done with the Mifflin School on one of your assignments earlier in your career. Do you think it realistic to do a little more than encourage police officers to participate in this mentoring program, but to give them some incentives to do so?

Commissioner JOHNSON. Well, what I did, growing up in North Philadelphia—and I rank the—the rank of a captain, I felt as though I wanted to give something back, and I called the school district, and I tried to find a school that had more problems than any other school in the city. They picked Mifflin School, because, I guess, at that point, approximately 75 percent of the kids were from the Epperford projects, the Epperford development. I asked our officers to volunteer to go into the different classrooms. And I met with the principals and the teachers first. And our thing that was that we're not going there as security officers, we're going there as mentors and tutors. The only qualification was that if a police officer qualified or volunteered to go, he or she had to stay the full year, because I thought that would be really bad if they go in there and then dropped out. We went there, and we would assign a police officer to every single classroom in the school. And as that person, say, for example, went through the first grade,

when they went to the second grade, that also went with them, all the way up until the time they graduated. The discipline went down, the attendance went up. Not only did we go to the schools, but we took 'em different places. We took them to the college. We even took 'em to Disney World. We took them all over to places.

Senator SPECTER. Commissioner Johnson, there's no doubt that it would be helpful, and especially police officers who have a pervasive idea as to how young people get into trouble. What I would like you to do—and I would like the same thing for Director Ramos and Dr. Zahorchak—really, everybody on the panel—to consider where we might get more mentors from our own offices as starting points. I would be willing to do that in my office, to give some incentives or some time off, if we could find some way. We are going to be putting this question, really, more to the second panel, because they're—have practical experience in the field with the mentoring programs. But I think, with the support of the Governor and the mayor, you have the large pool of employees available. Pat Meehan and Arlen Specter have some. The DA's office has some. The Department of Education could, but their efforts would be best used within the identification of at-risk youth. But I'd like you to think about it. My staff's going to be following up with you to see if there's some way we can find people within government to undertake this mentoring.

Mr. Delaney——

Commissioner JOHNSON. Well, I——

Senator SPECTER. Did you want to say something further, Commissioner?

Commissioner JOHNSON. Yes, sir.

I have all the commanders right now—approximately 30 commanders—we go to the different schools every single week. And I think, especially for the Afro-American police officers, they have an obligation to give back and go back to the neighborhoods and the schools that they grew up in. There's approximately 2,400 Afro-Americans in the city, and I've been talking to the organization—talking to the City League, without getting paid to go back. I think they have an obligation to go back. And I've been meeting with them, and will continue to meet with them, to go back to our schools and go back to our neighborhoods. We have an obligation to do that, and we're starting to do that.

Senator SPECTER. Well, thank you very much for what you're doing there, Commissioner. And it's a good model for expansion.

Mr. Delaney, you've put your finger on a critical spot, 18- to 24-year olds. My recollection, as DA, is that that's where we had the violence, the armed robberies, the homicides. But how do you deal with that category? You're talking about mentoring, which seems to apply more to more impressionable age groups. Can you mentor someone in the 18- to 24-year-old category, or do you really need a parole officer or a probation officer with the kind of experience and toughness that that kind of a position would entail?

Mr. DELANEY. Senator, I believe you need both. If—the way we've described YVRP to people who have never heard of it is, it's the stereotypical mother and father, it's the stereotypical disciplinary father and the stereotypical nurturing mother. And the police and probation provide the discipline/supervision side. The

streetworker supplies the nurturing side. And there are a lot of obstacles to getting somebody who's 18 or 19 or 20, who's dropped out of school, who doesn't know how to read well or write well, to go to a job interview, because he's not sold on the fact that that job interview is going to lead to something productive, the way all of us were raised, and the way all of us have raised our children. So, it's a struggle to get at-risk young people to participate in the prosocial activities of everyday life that we all take for granted.

So, that's why YVRP, I believe, had shown success, because it couples the intensive supervision with the intensive support.

Senator SPECTER. Does YVRP deal with 18- to 24-year-olds?

Mr. DELANEY. About 75 percent of our youth partners are 18 to 24.

Senator SPECTER. Well, is that the age group which is providing guidance to younger people, or is that the age group to which guidance is provided?

Mr. DELANEY. The latter. It's the age group—they are our youth partners. They're the subjects, the targets, if you will, of YVRP. So that——

Senator SPECTER. So, you are, in effect, mentoring people in the 18- to 24-year-old category?

Mr. DELANEY. Yes, Senator.

Senator SPECTER. And, again, who are the mentors?

Mr. DELANEY. Streetworkers, people employed by the Philadelphia Antidrug/Antiviolence Network, what we know in Philadelphia as PAAN, P-A-A-N, who are, by and large, older people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, who come from the same communities as the youth partners now live in.

Senator SPECTER. And how much does that program have to be expanded? And what would be the cost?

Mr. DELANEY. We're in five police districts now. There are at least five more that we would expand to. So, the total would be nine or ten, at a cost of $1.6 million a year. I liked your earlier figure, 14 million a year.

Senator SPECTER. Okay. Well, Senator Casey and I have something to shoot for.

That leads me to you, Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Well, thank you very much. I want to thank Senator Specter again for bringing us together.

And I should note for the record that, because of Senator Specter's convening of this panel today, and this hearing, that, by virtue of that, he made me a member of both the Appropriations Committee and the Judiciary Committee for one brief shining moment. So——

[Laughter.]

Senator SPECTER. It's more than Senator Harry Reid, the Majority Leader, has done for you.

[Laughter.]

Senator CASEY. That's true. That's true. I'll talk to him about that when I get back.

[Laughter.]

Senator CASEY. But I had a couple of broader questions. But first, to Mr. Delaney, and to all the panelists, we appreciate your

testimony and the expertise and the dedicated public service you bring to these issues.

Mr. Delaney, you talked about the elements of YVRP and the—as others did—but I want to make sure I understand. When you talk about a father-and-mother model—in other words, as you've—you phrase it as the stereotypical father and mother—and they're, obviously, broad generalizations there—but in the YVRP model, the parole officer, in effect, becomes the tough disciplinarian. Is that the right role?

Mr. DELANEY. Yes, Senator.

Senator CASEY. Okay. And then, the more nurturing role is played by the streetworker, is that correct?

Mr. DELANEY. Yes.

Senator CASEY. Okay. And that streetworker is about the same age, usually, or within a range of 18 to 24, a little older, maybe?

Mr. DELANEY. Usually older. These are people that have come from the same neighborhoods that the youth partners now live in, who have established a pro-social track record, who want to give back to their community. So, most of the streetworkers are in their later 20s or 30s—some, older.

Senator CASEY. Okay. Now, one thing I heard from virtually everyone here—and I think United States Attorney Pat Meehan said it first. He talked about comprehensive intervention. Others talked about intensive intervention. And it seems like all three of those words are important. It has to be comprehensive, which I hope others in Washington hear. I remember, last year, when some of the budget cuts were announced, Senator Specter, rare and—and I don't want to get into parties here, but I will for one moment—said that those cuts were—I'm—think I'm quoting him accurately—″scandalous," health and education cuts. So, there were a lot of people in Washington and some State capitals around the country—not this State capital, but other States—who really believe the little eyedropper here and there of money can solve problems. They don't want to put the money up, because they're more interested in tax cuts and pleasing the wealthy. But I think those three words are critically important: "comprehensive," which means dollars and commitment; and guts to fund it; "intensive," that it has to have a focus when it comes to intervention.

So, my question for all of you—and chime in one at a time, if you can; I know we have limited time here—is, other than YVRP—we know that works, we know a number of these other programs work well—other than that program, if you had a—an opportunity to directly impact the kind of dollars that the Federal budget puts aside for programs like this, based upon your experience, based upon your knowledge of these programs, what are the other programs that you would fund either significantly or if you could fund them to scale? YVRP, a good example. What about—and if you could make a quick list.

Mr. VALLAS. Yeah. Well, very quickly, let me just make a brief comment. YVRP and AVRP and those programs, even the Parent Truant Officer Program or the School-Based Community Police Program, they're interventions, and they're interventions a lot of times that deal with kids who have—I don't want to say "have been lost," but it's difficult for those kids to recover, because once the

kids reach the age of 18 to 24, I mean, you've—you're not—YVRP is not going to solve the problem. I think they're the most—I think they're the best immediate interventions that can be—that can be deployed to bring crime down. But we need to look longer-term, in terms of the type of things that we need to implement and be brought to scale.

Let me be very specific on specific programs. First of all, the investment in early childhood education, particularly in the 0-to-3, Cradle to the Classroom Program, absolutely critical. The biggest problem we have is inexperienced parents, parents who just do not know how to raise their children. It's as simple as that. And we've got to train the next generation of parents. I mean, there's, you know, a—how do parents—how do we learn how to be parents? We learn from our parents. And somewhere along the line, that chain in that—that link in the—in that long chain was broke. And once you have one weak link, the entire chain is useless.

So, bringing programs to scale, like Cradle to the Classroom, so that we can begin to train parents on proper childrearing and proper support, and to get those first-time parents into high school, and to get them a high school diploma, is absolutely critical. And those programs are not cost-prohibitive. Those programs are extraordinarily efficient. Our—to put one child through a Cradle Program costs anywhere from $2,000 to $2,500. It's extraordinarily effective.

Second is transition programs. And transition programs to target middle grades—middle-aged kids. You know, we can tell you, at sixth grade, who's going to drop out. And actually, I think we can tell you, at third grade, who's going to drop out. But by sixth grade, with almost—unbelievable certainty, we can tell you who's dropping out and who's not dropping out. Being able to get the overaged underachievers into transition programs, transition classrooms, transition schools is absolutely critical. Where we've done this, and where we've piloted this, we've had dramatic effect. Bringing those things to scale—and that does not necessarily mean that you've got to invest a substantial amount of money, because if the money follows the kids—if the money follows the kids, technically, you know, that's spending the money effectively. But it's the gap funding that we need, because the difference between putting a child in a transition school as opposed to keeping them in a regular school is about $3,000 to $4,000 a kid.

And then, the final thing is, I can't stress enough, programs that expand dual enrollment, early college, programs that create work-study. If I can tell a sixth-grader, if they go to high school, by their senior year, they're actually going to be enrolled in college while they're still going to high school, and that there's going to be a work-study job for them at the end of their junior year, you'll see the graduation rates skyrocket. So, bringing those type of initiatives to scale—and they're not cost-prohibitive, because if the money is following the kids, you can substitute some of the savings from having kids out of the high school in a college university, or in a——

Senator CASEY. I want to——

Mr. VALLAS [continuing]. Work-study program.

Senator CASEY. Paul, thank you. I just want to go to——

Mr. VALLAS. Thank you.

Senator CASEY [continuing]. To others in the rest of the panel, because I know we're—we're over by 2 minutes now.

Mr. DELANEY. Senator, thank you for your question.

I want to identify something which everybody keeps talking about, "at-risk youth." And there has been great work done under the Communities That Care model to look at risk factors. Paul had identified that we can see ahead of time, often ahead of time, who are at the greater risk. And there was a great op-ed piece this weekend in the Inquirer by Dr. Bill Schwab from University of Pennsylvania. He's a surgeon that deals in the trauma centers. But he talks about looking at this in the same way we deal with the healthcare issue, where we identify the greatest risk for heart disease, and then you look to preventions for the kinds of things you can do to prevent that from happening. We're not doing it with violence in the way that we can, by identifying those most at risk. There are many great programs, many of which have been identified, once we do that. And I think using that model will be effective.

I have one other observation, though, that I think is significant, that's often missed. We also have a tremendous moving target when we're discussing the at-risk youth, because there's remarkable transience, not just from school to school within a district, or neighborhood to neighborhood, but really from city to city. And the problem is exacerbated when the kids keep moving to different areas, and then leave the protection of the programs that we've got in place for them.

Senator SPECTER. Would the concluding answerers try to be a little briefer?

Mr. ZAHORCHAK. Will do. Eighty-two percent of the people who are incarcerated are high school dropouts. It begins, I think, as Paul said, by the end of the third grade. But by the end of age 3, 30 million less word utterances to a child in poverty. What can we do? We have the Nurse-Parent Partnership that should be on that list. The Pre-K Counts and—the supplementing the Head Start Program that the Governor is doing to bring students to school as 3- and 4-year-olds are really vital. And then, of course, the interventions, like, in Pennsylvania, our alternative education programs, our student assistance program, tutoring, mentoring, the 21st century for—places for kids who are at risk to be after school hours with mentoring built into those places, all should be on the list.

Mr. RAMOS. I think most of the programs we've spoken about today are, as you noted, Senator, short-term-oriented, they're intervention. And they are, sort of, trying to intervene where many failures have happened before. And we've—and the additional YVRP and AVRP and other programs you've heard about—other—one thing we haven't spoken about that's—I would put in that short-term category is dealing with the issue of reentry. We also know that violence also relates very heavily—correlates very heavily with recidivism among people who have been in the criminal justice system, have been incarcerated at some point before.

On a more long-term basis, in—can't—it certainly can't be overstated—the value of strengthening the educational system, particularly at the pre-K level, but also noting, in addition to education

funding and Head Start funding, the consequences of some of the other trends, including cuts in welfare funding and housing. While those don't impact us as instantaneously as some of these other failures, they certainly make their way down the pipeline, and they come back to bite us.

Senator SPECTER. Mr. Johnson, do you care to respond?

Commissioner JOHNSON. Well, the only thing I think from my personal point of view, I think if a child, even though he's neither—he's at risk if he's born into a single-parent home. He's at risk if he's born to a parent who's addicted to drugs. He's at risk if he's born into poverty. So, even from the very beginning of his life, if he's born into poverty if he's born to a single parent, he's born to parents who are addicted, they're at risk before they even come to the criminal justice system. We have to deal with—something to deal with those kids.

Senator SPECTER. Mr. Delaney?

Mr. DELANEY. I would just add two things, Senator. One is the recognition that the criminal justice system is a system. Granting more funds for more police officers would add additional people to prosecute or defend or supervise them is a failure.

Finally, I would add that we can't give up on people who, once they offend, are still in our communities. We spend a lot of money and a lot of resources on people in incarceration, as it should be, but we pay very little attention to offenders who remain in our community who need both support and supervision.

Senator SPECTER. Well, thank you all very much. I would like you to supplement your responses, in addition to the issues already covered, with a projection as to how many at-risk youth there are in our city, and what additional mentors we need. And that fits in with the request as to whether you would press your own organizations to provide some additional mentoring.

Well, thank you very much.

We now turn to our second panel, Ms. Carroll, Ms. McClanahan, Mr. Pennington, Mr. Fair, and Mr. Harkavy.

[Pause.]

Senator SPECTER. We now turn to our second panel. Thank you for joining us. And we will focus now with experts in the field of handling at-risk youth, delinquency problems, and the mentoring issue.

And we turn, as our first witness, to Ms. Jennifer Carroll, the director of the Match Support Program of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Southeastern Pennsylvania. Prior to joining this organization, she worked with special-needs children in a number of capacities. The Big Brothers Big Sisters program has worked with some 70,000 youths with some 500 agencies across the country, and has found that, with 18 months of mentoring, participants are 56 percent less likely to skip school, and 46 percent less likely to initiate drug use.

Thank you for joining us, Ms. Carroll, and we look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF JENNIFER CARROLL, DIRECTOR, MATCH SUPPORT, BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF AMERICA, SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Ms. CARROLL. Thank you, Senator, for inviting us to testify today and for bringing attention to the challenges facing the youth in our city.

I would also like to thank the Senator for his long and strong support with mentoring, and acknowledge the work of his Appropriations Subcommittee in funding critical national mentoring initiatives.

Big Brothers Big Sisters makes and supports one-to-one relationships between at-risk children and volunteer mentors. And we know about the power that these friends and role models have in young lives.

In 2006, we served 2,900 children, the vast majority of them from Philadelphia. Our near-term goal is to serve 5,000 children annually, because we know that the need in this community is great. In fact, we have more than 1,300 children on the waiting list, the vast majority of them young boys living here in Philadelphia. In a city where 180,000 children ages 14 and over had eight or more absences last year, where half of ninth-graders don't graduate on time, and where the number of murders involving young males continues to skyrocket, it is clear we need to do more to support the youth in our community, and mentoring is one approach that helps.

Other panelists today can emphasize the research documenting the positive impacts of mentoring. What I want to emphasize are the steps that we take to make it work.

Since the beginning of Big Brothers Big Sisters over a century ago, our organization has focused on at-risk youth, usually children from single-parent families growing up in depressed economic situations. Today we also have programs that focus on children who are already demonstrating patterns of delinquency or truancy, or who are already beginning to engage in violence.

Our Amachi mentoring program specifically targets children who have parents in prison. We serve children ages 6 to 18, though our strong preference is to match children before the age of 13.

Based on census estimates of the number of children living at or below poverty level, we estimate there are over 80,000 children in Philadelphia who are at risk because of factors such as poverty, poor education, or challenging family circumstances. So, as we've grown over the years, more than doubling the number of children we serve annually since 2002, we've had to spend more time recruiting mentors for our programs.

We know we need to match more of the children on our waiting list. We're working to highlight the need and value of mentoring so that more men step up. We're working to counter the image that a person has to be a saint or a CEO in order to be a good mentor by emphasizing that everyone has experiences, insights, and interests that are valuable for children. In fact, we're currently working on campaigns to emphasize the "average Joe" has much to offer children. We're not looking for perfection, we're looking for good people who are willing to commit to spending time with a child.

We know that the way to build strong, safe, and impactful relationships is through careful screening of mentors and through pro-

fessional support after the match is made. Asking our volunteers to commit to meeting their Little Brother or Little Sister two to four times a month for a period of a year is important. The total volunteer time our mentors spend with children in the program, roughly 144,000 hours a year, is impressive and a testimony to the volunteer spirit. And 63 percent of our nearly 2,100 open matches have lasted more than 12 months.

In Philadelphia, we've benefited from our relationships with the city and school district. We would not be able to serve the thousands of children we do each year without their support. The challenges we face—a need for more African-American male mentors, unpredictable funding streams, increasing demands for documentation, an overlap of databases and reporting for different funders—are challenges faced by nonprofits and Big Brother Big Sister programs everywhere. But in a city where millions are spent on incarceration, surely we can find the financial and political will to ensure the children over—the future of our children.

The reality is that mentoring is a cost-effective intervention. The cost of making and professionally supporting a one-to-one relationship for a year is a mere fraction of the cost of juvenile incarceration.

Finally, we know that there is still enormous untapped potential in our community. Just last week, one of our local newspaper columnists did a story on 13-year-old Nasheed, who was just matched with his Big Brother. Nasheed has been on our waiting list since he was 8 years old. As a result of that story, we've had a noticeable increase in the number of males inquiring about becoming a Big Brother.

In the end, it's simple. Mentoring is not a cure for the challenges facing the city, but it clearly belongs as part of a multipronged approach. Our children need mentors, and engaging this community in the lives of our children is imperative.

On behalf of Big Brothers Big Sisters Southeastern Pennsylvania, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Carroll appears as a submission for the record.]

Senator SPECTER. Thank you very much, Ms. Carroll. I inadvertently was looking for Ms. McClanahan as the first witness, but thank you.

Ms. CARROLL. You're welcome.

Senator SPECTER. We do now turn to Ms. Wendy McClanahan, vice president for the Research of Public/Private Ventures, which analyzes the effectiveness of the youth programs.

Ms. McClanahan holds an MS in human development and is currently working on her Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania. We look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF WENDY MCCLANAHAN, VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH, PUBLIC/PRIVATE VENTURES (P/PV)

Ms. MCCLANAHAN. Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.

Public/Private Ventures' mission is to improve the effectiveness of social policies, programs, and community initiatives, especially as they affect youth and young adults. We do this by identifying

or developing promising approaches to critical social problems by rigorously evaluating these approaches and, when suitable, by replicating them in new communities.

Like the other stakeholders, P/PV is deeply concerned about violent crime, which is on the rise in many of our Nation's cities. Homicides in urban areas have increased, and, in Philadelphia, homicide was up by 15 percent in 2005. Unfortunately, this increase looks like it might be the start of a trend.

Many have expressed hope that mentoring can play a role in reducing violent crime. For more than 15 years, P/PV has been investigating the value of mentoring as a strategy to improve the lives of young people. In our pivotal report on Big Brothers Big Sisters program, titled "Making a Difference," we presented evidence, persuasive evidence derived from a rigorous random assignment study that well-designed mentoring programs could measurably decrease negative behaviors and increase positive behaviors among young people.

In a series of projects over the past decade, P/PV has extended its reach into mentoring programs in a variety of service environments, including its impact on crime and violence, and has added to the findings about mentoring's potential.

For today's panel, I would characterize the findings from this work as follows:

Mentoring offers real promise in reducing violence among children, youth, and young adults, but there are important qualifications that are essential to understanding both the value and the limitations of mentoring. Some of the positive findings are heartening. We saw a reduction in homicides through YVRP, decreased recidivism rates in an employment-oriented program for ex-prisoners, called "Ready4Work," lower incidents of depression among youth in a program for justice-system-involved juveniles, called the National Faith-based Initiative," less violence behavior—violent behavior and substance abuse among youngsters in BBBS, and a significant reduction in child abuse and neglect and subsequent parental behavior of both mothers and their children in the Nurse-Family Partnerships.

Findings such as these should rightfully inform decisions about national and local intervention policies and the role of mentoring, in particular. That is all to the good. However, the qualifications, significant ones, are far too often overlooked or minimized.

I want to emphasize three qualifications, in particular, that we need to keep in mind based on P/PV's research. First, mentoring is not a cure-all social intervention or a magic bullet. Particularly for very high-risk populations, the criminally involved, and the young adults we're concerned with today, P/PV's research suggests that mentoring alone isn't an answer. These young people bring rough histories. Multiple supports and services in well-crafted program settings are essential to alter, even slightly, the trajectory of their lives. In the Ready4Work Program, for instance, mentoring did appear to contribute to improved outcomes, but there was also intensive case management, wraparound services, and job-placement assistance, a dense web of support that gave the opportunity for these mentoring relationships to take root.

Similarly, the mentoring that took place in the YVRP was accompanied by regular supervision from probation officers. And the mentors in this program were full-time employees, paid streetworkers. P/PV believes it was the overall service package that helped reduce the incidence of violent behavior.

Second, just as there aren't free lunches, mentoring is not the cost-free social program it's often made out to be. The experience of BBBS makes it clear that the cost of goods, screening, training, and ongoing professional support are far from negligible. And in programs that use paid streetworkers or paid counselors, such as NFP and YVRP, the costs are even higher. But the need for strong supports is paramount. P/PV's work suggests that a solid support apparatus is crucial for mentors of high-risk adolescents and young adults. But these costs are likely far lower than the costs of long-term incarceration.

Third, mentoring isn't easy, either as a programmatic task or a personal commitment. For programs, there is the continuing challenge of finding enough individuals prepared to dedicate the time and energy to building a relationship and matching them with the right mentee. When that mentee is a high-risk youth or a young adult returning from incarceration, finding suitable and willing volunteers, and keeping them, is a serious challenge. The Ready4Work Program, despite strenuous and sustained effort by staff, was able to match mentors with just over 50 percent of its participants.

There are other challenges. For example, the ex-offender him-or herself may have no interest in having a mentor, or have other demands on his or her time.

We also need to be mindful of the larger reality. With these high-risk populations, even our most striking statistical success is modest. Recidivism rates may be reduced, but still remain too high. Homicides and violent behavior are lessened, but by too little.

But the successes are real and substantial, and our work to date has established that mentoring can contribute to measurable benefits in a variety of settings.

On behalf of P/PV, thank you for the opportunity to speak.

[The prepared statement of Ms. McClanahan appears as a submission for the record.]

Senator SPECTER. Thank you, Ms. McClanahan.

Our next witness is Mr. Michael Pennington, juvenile justice specialist for the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, considerable experience in the issues involving delinquency, substances abuse, school dropout, teen pregnancy, and related programs.

Thank you for coming in today, Mr. Pennington, to address the subject matter on a statewide basis.

STATEMENT OF MIKE PENNINGTON, JUVENILE JUSTICE SPECIALIST, PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

Mr. PENNINGTON. Thank you. Good morning, Senators. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to talk about youth violence, which is a major concern for all of us.

Although there are many factors that contribute to youth violence, I would like to focus my remarks today on prevention programs that are grounded in research and on quality aftercare and reentry services for youth leaving delinquency placements.

The demand for prevention programs that have been proven effective in preventing adolescent problem behavior has never been grater. Historically, many of the resources committed to the prevention of youth violence, delinquency, and other problem behaviors have been invested in untested programs with little or no evaluation. Without quality, aftercare, and prevention, you will see more youth violence.

Today, we are blessed with a substantial body of research that tells us what contributes to these behaviors and what can help us prevent them. The goal of our prevention funding is to support the implementation of programs that prevention scientists have evaluated and deemed effective at reducing problem behaviors. Some of these programs that we have funded, known as Blueprints for Violence Prevention Model Programs, include Big Brothers and Big Sisters mentoring programs, multisystemic therapy, functional family therapy, bullying prevention, and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies.

I think it is critical that we continue to invest in proven, effective programs. For example, the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies Program, PATHS, is a program that promotes emotional and social competencies, and reducing aggression and behavioral problems in elementary-school-aged children, while enhancing the educational process in the classrooms. Evaluations have demonstrated significant improvements in the following areas: increased ability to tolerate frustration, improved self-control, and use of more effective conflict resolution strategies.

One of the requirements of our funding is that applications be submitted on behalf of a local collaborative board. Based on—local collaborative boards, must conduct a risk and resource assessment that includes—identifies priorities—risk factors for problem behaviors. This will help local communities select evidence-based programs that would be most effective, and the development within a collaborative environment within their community to ensure that the prevention strategy is developed within a collaborative environment.

Even though these are model programs, they will not result in significant improvements for children and families if they are not implemented the way each was designed and tested. It is critical that we provide strong and proactive technical assistance to local communities that receive our funding to ensure quality implementation. Technical assistance is also provided to develop an outcome assessment plan, as well as a plan for sustaining the program long term.

It is important that we continue to work collaboratively across State agencies and with local community efforts so that our prevention efforts are well coordinated to best utilize and maximize our collective resources.

There are some proven initiatives to build on in Pennsylvania. Communities That Care, which is now a critical tool as part of Federal SAMHSA's strategic prevention framework. CTC is a violence

and delinquency prevention strategy, provides communities with a process to mobilize the community, identify risk and preventive factors, and develop a comprehensive prevention plan.

Another major initiative in Pennsylvania is developing a comprehensive aftercare system by the year 2010. Stakeholders in the juvenile justice system, as well as others in relates systems, are working together to develop a model aftercare system for youth leaving delinquency placements.

A comprehensive approach to aftercare will ensure that youth receive timely and appropriate social support in areas such as enrolling immediately in school or having a job waiting for them, continuing the follow-up services that are required for those who receive physical or behavior health treatment while in care, having strong adult support from family or other caring adults, having sufficient attention paid to developing their competencies while in care, so they can successfully return to their home and community.

It is important that returning juveniles who need to continue their treatment in community have access to a continuum of services that have been demonstrated to be effective. Effective aftercare is crucial if youths are to benefit from residential treatment programs and successfully return home.

I think we can all agree that it would be ideal if we could prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system in the first place. Successful delinquency prevention programs attempt to increase protective factors, those positive traits, beliefs, relationships, and connections in juveniles' lives that help them overcome diversity. As parents, we want these for our own children. We should want no less for children at risk of entering the juvenile justice system. Without quality aftercare and prevention, you will see more youth violence in our communities.

There are no easy solutions to addressing youth violence, but we do know that healthy communities, strong families, and quality education are critical to the success of our youth.

I submitted additional supplemental written testimony on our juvenile justice and delinquency prevention plan, and an overview of our prevention initiative outline for more detail on our programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today, and I look forward to our working together and providing youth with the best opportunities to be successful.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pennington appears as a submission for the record.]

Senator SPECTER. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Pennington.

Our next witness is Mr. David Fair, vice president for community impact for The United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania. Previously, he worked with the city of Philadelphia on youth services, bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and currently studying for a mater's degree in social work at Temple.

Thank you for coming in today, Mr. Fair, and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF DAVID FAIR, VICE PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNITY IMPACT FOR THE UNITED WAY OF SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. FAIR. Thank you.

Since 1921, our United Way has raised an invested several billion dollars of financial contributions and mobilized countless hours of volunteer energy to relieve the pain and suffering of vulnerable people throughout our region. And in those 86 years, we have learned, again and again, a very obvious lesson: it is often easier to despair that the problems facing us are intractable than it is to make the effort to actually solve them. We commend both of you for taking this opportunity today to help us focus on real solutions to the challenge of youth violence.

For too long, we have invested both taxpayer and charitable dollars in experimenting with ever new approaches, while failing to direct adequate resources to the strategies that have already been shown to work in today's world.

I have worked for over 30 years in a variety of health and social service fields, and in each environment we have always recognized the importance of mentoring as an essential component of any solutions-focused effort to help our children. But because of regulations, politics, habit, when it comes to spending money, priority has always been given to hiring and supporting more and more professional staff to do what we used to rely on families and communities to accomplish. We believe that solutions to the problems of youth violence can best be found not just in more professional services, but by investing in those families and communities themselves. We must continue to study the effectiveness of different mentoring models, but we don't have to wait for more studies to know what we need to do today

Expansion of quality programs, matching adult and peer mentors to youth is needed now in all parts of our region. We need new approaches to offering mentoring that fit with today's urban realities and reflect the developmental needs of the youth we mentor. Traditional mentoring models, while still effective for many youth, sometimes fall short in helping today's highest-risk and older youth face the many complicated challenges and obstacles that limit their chances for future success. We need to address the shortage of male mentors and mentors of color, the difficulty many mentors have in relating to and supporting more troubled youth, the resistance many young have to trusting mentors because of bad experiences with other adults, and that—the lack of human and financial resources at hand, to be more creative in defining what a mentor is and ways of mentoring that are designed for today's world.

As we've heard, more and more of our young people are facing more serious and numerous risks, and the mentoring they need is much more complicated than it used to be. More and more of our adult mentors are finding they can't handle the challenges presented by their mentees, because they have not been adequately trained or did not realize what they were getting into, and because no one individual functioning alone can adequately counter the influence of a poisonous peer culture.

We need to accept that, at least for those youth of higher risk of committing or being victimized by violence, we need to do more than set up more opportunities for volunteer adults to play only a glancing role in their lives. Mentoring is not about "hanging out," and it's no longer about simply providing a way for kids to get to ball games they might not have been able to get to on their own.

For older youth, mentoring must be provided in the context of adolescent developmental needs, including working with the influence and importance of peer relationships and addressing the pressures of academic and employment demands. We have an urgent need to create a much larger cadre of mentors that is determined in its approach to this work, is willing to learn new ways of engaging and working with their mentees, and which comes from the communities where the youth live. We need to make sure that these mentors learn the skills they need to overcome the barriers that keep them from being more effective with their mentees, and that sometimes discourage them from sticking it out when the child tests their commitment. We need community organizations to find more effective ways to nurture and support both mentors and mentees in what for both can be among the most important relationships they ever have. We need to provide the context for safe and effective mentoring for older youth, including alternative approaches, such as group mentoring and career- or academically focused mentoring.

This is not going to be easy. Today's young people are not growing up in the world that most of us did. A growing body of research is recognizing the impact of chronic violence and community trauma on these children. Our teens today grew up during the height of the crack epidemic, a time characterized by a spike in murder and addiction. This violence and drug penetration was significantly higher in the neighborhoods in which these young people grew up than citywide statistics reflect. Many of these young people grew up believing that the adults could not care for them adequately, or even protect them; and so, they organized themselves, as best they could, to care for and protect themselves. The resulting culture has redefined our work with young people, many of whom we have taught to be leery of adults, hypervigilant about perceived threats, and despondent about their own futures.

We're not ignorant of these realities, but we are somehow disconnected from our power to do something about them. We often respond to the crisis facing so many of our children as if it was a forest fire. As you may know, there's a couple of ways to fight a forest fire. You can put it out, or you can set up a fire break. A fire break creates a barrier around the fire so that it doesn't spread. Then you wait for the fire itself to burn itself out.

At United Way, we suggest that we—that various public systems of care recognize that quality mentoring can be an essential tool that they each must use to achieve their objectives for the people they serve. In the field of mentoring, we need to create new and stronger ways of training mentors, especially those with intensive challenges. In the community, we need to prioritize——

Senator SPECTER. Mr. Fair, how much more time will you need?

Mr. FAIR. Just 15 seconds, sir.

Senator SPECTER. Okay.

Mr. FAIR. In the community, we need to prioritize support for new strategies to recruit mentors, especially mentors of color and male mentors. We need to invest in new models of mentoring that address the developmental needs of older youth.

Part of the 30 years I spent in social services was in the behavioral health field, and one thing I learned from those days was how

important hope and expectation are to the success of psychotherapy. I think that is also true about mentoring. We ask that we resist giving in to the despair that makes us think that youth violence is inevitable and that it can only be solved with a police response. We ask that we choose to invest in hope for our children rather than in simply managing their pain. We ask that we don't just build a fire break and let the fire burn, because we've learned another lesson in those 86 years. We know we have it within us to put the fire out.

Thanks.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fair appears as a submission for the record.]

Senator SPECTER. Thank you, Mr. Fair.

Our final witness is Dr. Ira Harkavy, who is the associate vice president and founding director of the Center of Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Harkavy holds a bachelor's degree and Ph.D. in history from the University of Pennsylvania.

We welcome you here, Dr. Harkavy, and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF IRA HARKAVY, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT AND FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. HARKAVY. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Specter. I want to thank you for inviting me to testify at this most important hearing. I want to thank Senator Casey for your participation.

Truly democratic partnerships between universities and schools is a powerful strategy for changing communities, school, and higher education itself, and for reducing youth violence. The partnerships that I will describe represent the fruits of over two decades of collaboration between Penn, community organizations, and the public schools in Philadelphia and West Philadelphia. I should note, Senator Specter, that your—you have been a supporter of this, as initially Joan Specter was when she was a council member, and Senator Casey's father, Governor Casey, provided enormous support over the years for this effort. I want to thank both of you for that support.

The Penn Center for Community Partnerships, together with community partners, have created University-Assisted Community Schools that are centers of education and engagement that provide a range of services for students, their parents, and other community members. This approach works toward tapping, integrating, mobilizing, and galvanizing the resources of communities, including colleges and universities, to improve the community, the school, and the education of students.

Somewhat more specifically, the strategy assumes that, like colleges and universities, public schools can function as environment-changing institutions that can become the strategic centers of broadbased partnerships that genuinely engage and coordinate a wide variety of community organizations and institutions.

Public schools belong to all members of the community. They are, therefore, particularly well suited to function as neighborhood hubs or a nodes around which local partnerships and youth programs

can be generated and formed. When they play that role, schools function as community institutions par excellence. They then provide a decentralized democratic community-based response to significant community problems and simultaneously help young people make positive contributions to the community and learn better—and learn better through action-oriented, collaborative community-based problem solving.

Begun in 1985 by Penn and its school and community partners, the University-Assisted Community School Program now involves over 6,000 children, youth, parents, and community members each year in its six primary sites in West Philadelphia. Additional school-day, after-school, family, and community program reach several thousand more individuals.

Through collaboration between school, university, and community partners, each University-Assisted Community School site has a variety of locally determined activities and partnerships, often with a focus on health, environment, arts, and culture. The programs engage students K through 16 in real-world, hands-on community problem solving that is integrated into the school curriculum, as well as through extended-day, weekend, and summer programs.

Young people at each of these schools are engaged in creative work designed to advance their skills, abilities, and personal and social development through service to their school, families, and community. At Penn, faculty and students are engaged in service learning activities that involve the application of knowledge to solve these problems. Over 150 courses have been offered, 57 in 2006–07 academic year alone, engaging more than 60 faculty members. More than 1,400 students participate in academically based community service courses. Penn student support all aspects of this program by assisting evenings, weekends, and during the school day.

Briefly summarized, I'll cite one program. That is a program at Sayre High School that involves the creation of a school-based community health center. That health center now involves faculty and students from throughout the University of Pennsylvania, literally hundreds of students and over 20 faculty, linking the academic work of Penn students to improving the school and community.

Simultaneously, the students at the Sayre School are learning through the delivery of healthcare and the implementation of health services, under the leadership of university faculty and students. For example, medical intake procedure programs have developed in which Sayre students learn about community health concerns, such as hypertension, obesity, diabetes, and gain clinical experience through working on the school-based health center. When this—a school health center will actually formally open, they will work under Penn doctors and nurses on a basis of linking their entire academic program.

Also, this program has extended to after-school activities that involve students and faculty working after school, weekend programs, 21C programs, and a variety of other activities. K through 8 programs exist, programs for high school students, evening programs for adults, basketball leagues, summer programs serving hundreds, if not thousands, of members of that community and

school. And a major antiviolence initiative has been developed by the community school and Penn's faculty and staff.

The issue here is that, simultaneously, this increases and improves the functioning of the University of Pennsylvania and the functioning of the school and links to the learning and development of students.

In summary, University-Assisted Community Schools serve, educate, and activate students and their families and other local residents. Students not only learn by doing, but also learn by and for service. Simultaneously, the university benefits from the unique critical opportunities community schools provide for learning, research, civil consciousness, outreach, and program development. Putting this theory into practice, the Sayre-Penn University-Assisted Community School model holds promise for West Philadelphia, Penn, other communities across the country. We currently work with over 100 universities——

Senator SPECTER. Dr. Harkavy, how much more time will you——

Mr. HARKAVY. About 17 seconds. Right at the very end.

To speed and advance the development of University-Assisted Community Schools as a vehicle to make our schools and communities safer for students, teachers, parents, neighborhoods, businesses, and the Federal Government, the Government could, in fact, do the following:

One, develop and apply innovative funding strategies that provide support to broadbased local coalitions designed to develop and sustain University-Assisted Community Schools.

Two, create a multi-agency Federal commission designed to advance and implement University-Assisted Community Schools.

And, three, strengthen and expand community-based work-study to engage more students with local public schools.

I want to thank you, Senator Specter, for your time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Harkavy appears as a submission for the record.]

Senator SPECTER. Thank you, Dr. Harkavy.

Ms. Carroll, you estimated that there are some 80,000 at-risk young people in the city of Philadelphia. How do you come to that figure?

Ms. CARROLL. That's our estimate based on census data, that—children currently living at or below poverty level, in addition to other risk factors, such as parents that did not graduate high school, difficult family circumstances, other different factors that factor into children being at risk.

Senator SPECTER. And you have testified—or, in your written testimony—that you are short some 1,300 mentors, because 1,300 requests have been made.

Ms. McClanahan, you have noted in your testimony that there are tens of thousands of college students in the Philadelphia area, where they could receive credit for functioning as mentors. Has your organization undertaken any effort to try to get the colleges and universities in the area to provide mentors?

Ms. MCCLANAHAN. We have not. The bulk of our work, looking at where mentors can be recruited from, have been with—in terms of new strategies—have been——

Senator SPECTER. Do you think——

Ms. MCCLANAHAN [continuing].—Actually with the——

Senator SPECTER. Do you think the——

Ms. MCCLANAHAN [continuing].—Faith-based communities.

Senator SPECTER. Do you think that such an effort would be likely to be successful? Let me direct that question to you, Dr. Harkavy. The University of Pennsylvania has a relationship with Sayre High School. Are you able to counsel or mentor students at risk at Sayre?

Mr. HARKAVY. Absolutely. The mentoring occurs both through classroom day experiences, and also a variety of after-school activities, that involve a relationship in which students work on such issues as college access, work on issues such as improving academic performance, but also form a relationship in which the college student works with the high school student in a broad range of areas to improve the academic work and performance of the student.

Senator SPECTER. How success is that?

Mr. HARKAVY. Over the period of time that we've had this program and a variety of others throughout this city and around the country, the data indicates very strong results. It indicates results from the youngest children all the way through high school.

Senator SPECTER. How many students from the University of Pennsylvania are engaged in that program?

Mr. HARKAVY. Currently, I would say, at the Sayre program alone, there must be—over 200 students must be engaged——

Senator SPECTER. What would you say——

Dr. HARKAVY [continuing]. With Sayre.

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. The potential was for Penn students to participate? You have—what's the size of your student body now?

Mr. HARKAVY. It's about 9,000 students. There are currently 1,400——

Senator SPECTER. There is enormous potential there.

Mr. HARKAVY. Absolutely. I actually—just one note, quickly—there are 1,400 students currently——

Senator SPECTER. Do those students get any benefit or credit for doing that?

Mr. HARKAVY. They do, do this. The benefit they—a number of the students do this work as part of their academic work at Penn, so they're involved in active service learning courses in which they focus on, How do you improve reading? How do you improve nutrition? How you improve healthcare in those communities? And I would argue, Senator Specter, that colleges and universities are the single greatest resource available for engaging mentors and helping to improve local public schooling in a comprehensive model in which mentoring is one strong component.

Senator SPECTER. Mr. Fair, your written testimony, you point out that there are billions of dollars spent each year in, quote, "not preventing situations that lead to violence, but in ineffective temporary fixes of a haphazard symbol—symptom relief." What, specifically, would you suggest, to redirect those billions of dollars?

Mr. FAIR. I think, Senator, that it's important for us to hold accountable the more high-end interventions to the same standards we hold prevention services accountable to. For many years, I ran

a—the Division of Prevention Services for the city's Department of Human Services, and we always were asked to meet incredibly high standards, and quick standards, of effectiveness in how we were preventing child abuse, neglect, or delinquency. But what we don't spend enough time looking at is when we place 1,700 kids in delinquent care every year, but don't help them reintegrate into the community, as several others have testified. And they recidivate, and they become adults who are homeless or adults who are incarcerated. But those are outcomes that should make us question whether or not incarceration of teenagers is, in fact, an appropriate response. My——

Senator SPECTER. Mr.——

Mr. FAIR. My reference was basically that we need to rethink, What are we trying to achieve with taxpayer dollars? And stop treating just the symptoms, but also try to invest in prevention.

Senator SPECTER. Mr. Pennington, would you have any projection as to how many at-risks youths there are statewide?

Mr. PENNINGTON. I don't have that figure on hand. I now that there's—in 2005, is—concerning the juvenile justice, there were 45 dispositions of kids in the juvenile justice system. But from—we administer the Federal and State funds throughout the State, and what I do know, from getting those applications in on a yearly basis, is the tremendous need out there, when local communities apply for funding.

Senator SPECTER. Would you give some thought to that, so we could have a statewide projection there?

Mr. PENNINGTON. Sure.

Senator SPECTER. The red light went on as I was asking you my last question, Mr. Pennington. So, I'll turn now to Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Senator.

I know I—in my questioning last time, I went over, so—I've been on this committee for all but an hour, so if I want to stay on the committee, I'd better be careful here.

Thank you. I want to commend all of you for your work and for the scholarship that went into your testimony, and, obviously, the hours and days and weeks and months of the work you do to bring us the benefit of that experience.

One thing I wanted to ask you is something very practical. Senator Specter was focused on this. I want to follow up on it. Obviously, from the numbers that you've given him and given today by way of testimony, we have a big shortage. What do you think is the most effective recruitment strategy? Let me just preface this by saying that it—in my experience in State government, for example the Children's Health Insurance Program, a program that helps kids and their families, obviously, with healthcare, often the only way to get families to enroll is to buy television time. Everything else was secondary to television time. I don't want to be too simplistic here, but other than having a nonprofit or government pay for television ads, which I think will actually work, what else can we do, or what else can be done, to recruit people to serve as mentors?

Ms. CARROLL. I'd like to answer that, Senator Casey. One things we've seen—one thing we've seen other States do is to encourage employees of the State or the police department or any local or

State departments, to volunteer on their lunch hour by giving them paid time off to do so. And that's been very successful in other States, like Florida. Specifically, the Amachi program, which targets children of incarcerated parents, and giving individuals working in the juvenile justice system time off to volunteer, which—they make great mentors; that would be a great strategy.

Senator CASEY. So, employers—and Senator Specter was mentioning the fact that government employers, like all of us here, should participate in that. And I think that's a great idea.

Let me ask another very basic question, just to give people a sense of what we're talking about here. I know there may not be one definitive model here, but, just generally, based upon your experience, describe the average week of a mentor. In other words, how many hours, what's the interactions, how many hours a day. Can anyone, kind of, do a quick summary of what is—in other—what's it like to be a mentor, in a particular workweek?

Ms. CARROLL. What Big Brothers Big Sisters asks is two to four visits per month. We offer a variety options. So, you can visit a child at school during their lunch hour. You can visit them after school. And that may take an hour a week. But, to that child, it means a lot that you came to visit. We also have the community-based option, which can be anywhere from 2 to 4 hours on the—in the evenings or on the weekends and lets you engage in a wide variety of things together, doing things in your community, exposing the child to new experiences. So, it really can vary.

Senator CASEY. And I'm almost out of time. I'm giving Senator Specter back a minute that I stole from him earlier. But I wanted to—Ms. McClanahan, I wanted to highlight something you testified to by way a—emphasis, not necessarily a question. But on page 3 of your testimony, you say, and I quote, at the bottom of the page, that "mentoring can contribute to measurable benefits in a variety of settings, including programs for high-risk youth, violence-prone youth, and ex-prisoners." So, is that a longer way of saying "mentoring works?" You can say that definitively?

Ms. MCCLANAHAN. We can say definitively that mentoring works, with the important implication, as I talked about during my testimony, that it also needs to be coupled, for this population, with other core services, like employment and education.

Senator CASEY. Thank you.

Senator SPECTER. Well, thank you very much, Senator Casey, for your participation. And thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

Without objection, my full statement will be made a part of the record.

And I want to thank the Constitution Center and its president, Joe Torricella, for making available these facilities to us again today. We have been here with some frequency in the past on our hearings, and it is a great spot to talk about matters of public policy.

And for those who may be watching on the Pennsylvania Cable Network, let me say that it's a rare treat to come to the Constitution Center and to come through the interactive exhibits which are here. You can ask a question and get a dissertation on cases argued in the Supreme Court of the United States. You can vote for President, whether you think President Washington or President

Lincoln or President Kennedy was the greatest President. We have a set, set up, where you can raise your hand and be sworn in as President of the United States, and have your picture taken as if you were really there. That's the closest I've come. And others might——

[Laughter.]

Senator SPECTER [continuing]. Be interested in having a similar experience. So, that—the Constitution Center is a great spot to come and visit.

We intend to follow up on this hearing in a number of directions. Senator Casey and I, on the work of the Senate, will see if we can find some directed funding to those other nine police districts, at $1.6 million each, which have had such good results. And we'll take a look at the 18- to 24-year category that testimony was given to. And I intend to write to all the university presidents, and college, and will ask Senator Casey to join me in suggesting that they try to structure programs to give credit or encourage students to participate as mentors. With the testimony of Ms. Carroll, of 80,000 at-risk students, that's quite a lot, and there are 1,300 seeking mentors right now. And Ms. Carroll's additional testimony, that many who need mentors haven't requested them. And I'm going to follow up with Director Ramos on the question of whether we might find some volunteer funds to clean up the—to make the streets safe, as people are willing to pay to make the streets clean. Safety—cleanliness is next to godliness. Safety is survival, so that—that's another avenue to be directed.

And I would encourage the media covering this event to put the specific request by Bob Casey and Arlen Specter, that people ought to come forward and ought to volunteer to be mentors. And write to Senator Casey or myself on that subject, or pick up the phone and call my Philadelphia office, 215 repeat that, Michael?

Senator SPECTER. 215–597–7200.

That concludes our hearing. Thank you all very much.

[Whereupon, at 12:10 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

[Submissions for the record follow.]

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

Big Brothers Big Sisters
Southeastern Pennsylvania

Field Hearing
Senate Judiciary Committee

Value of Mentoring for Philadelphia Youth

Statement for the Record

Jennifer Carroll, Director of Match Support
Big Brothers Big Sisters Southeastern PA

Monday, February 19, 2007

Good morning. My name is Jennifer Carroll and I am the Director of Match Support for Big Brothers Big Sisters Southeastern, PA. I'm pleased to represent Big Brothers Big Sisters and to speak to the value of mentoring in reducing youth violence.

I would like to start by thanking Senator Specter for inviting Big Brothers Big Sisters to testify today and for bringing attention to the challenges facing the youth in our city. I would also like to thank the Senator for his long and strong support of mentoring and to acknowledge the work of his Appropriation Subcommittee in funding mentoring initiatives, specifically the Mentoring Children of Prisoners and Mentoring for Success programs. Our organization is a HHS Mentoring Children of Prisoners grantee, and it is no exaggeration to say that that funding was a catalyst in transforming us to where we are today—one of the largest Big Brothers Big Sisters affiliates in the nation, and one of the top non-profits in our region according to Charity Navigator.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the other governmental and non-profit organizations—some of whom are represented here today at this hearing—that have worked with us to support and strengthen mentoring programs in Philadelphia.

Big Brothers Big Sisters works on behalf of the thousands of children, families and volunteer mentors in our program: we know first-hand the power of mentoring. We are the largest BBBS affiliate in Pennsylvania and have served children in Philadelphia for over 90 years. We make and support one-to-one relationships between at-risk children and volunteer mentors, and we know about the power that these friends and role models can have in young lives.

In 2006, we served 2900 children—the vast majority of them from Philadelphia. Our near-term goal is to serve 5000 children annually, because we know that the need in our community is great. In fact, we have more than 1300 children currently on our waiting list—the majority of them young boys living here in Philadelphia. In a city where 180,000 children ages 14 and older had eight or more absences last year[1]; where half of 9th graders don't graduate on time[2]; and where the number of murders involving young males continues to skyrocket, it is clear that we need to do more to support the youth in our community. And mentoring is one approach that can help.

More to the point, we know that the way to build a strong future for children is by engaging everyone in the community—and mentoring is a powerful tool for engaging adults for the benefit of at-risk youth. In our work, we tend to emphasize—rightfully so—the children that benefit from our mentoring programs. But we would also like to point out one enormously impressive fact about BBBS mentoring—namely, behind each one of our nearly 3000 children served last year is a volunteer mentor—someone who stands up and volunteers to give to their community. We ask our volunteers to meet with their Littles for 2-4 hours per month, for a minimum of a year. The total volunteer time—roughly 144,000 hours a year—is impressive, and an unsung testimony to the volunteer spirit. We know that engaging adults in our community in the lives of children, is vital if we are to build Philadelphia into the great city that it deserves to be.

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[1] http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/news/16119803.htm
[2] http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/living/education/15792608.htm

Other panelists today can emphasize the research documenting the positive impact of mentoring. What I want to emphasize are the steps that we take to make mentoring work. And I also want to share just a few of the many stories that we hear daily at BBBS SEPA. We see the impact of mentoring every day, in the friendships that have been developed and in the lives that have been changed. We see how the steady presence of a mentor can provide new perspectives and experiences for a child that can literally change the arc of their lives.

Big Brother Kenny and 12-year old Israel had been matched for three years in Philadelphia's BBBS Amachi program when they heard the siren. Israel stopped dribbling the basketball and quietly told his Big Brother, "They're coming to arrest my father again; he's doing bad things." Kenny took his Little Brother home and found that Israel's suspicions were correct. Israel's father returned to prison that day—another in a string of increasingly serious offenses. During the years that Israel's father has been in and out of prison, his Big Brother has been a steady presence in his life; through basketball games, movies, and times spent just hanging out, Kenny is helping Israel to chart a path in life different from that of his father. Israel, now nearly 16, plans on becoming a police officer after he graduates from high-school.

Since the beginning of BBBS mentoring over a century ago, our organization has focused on at-risk youth like Israel—usually children from single-parent families, growing up in depressed economic situations.

Traditionally, children were enrolled in our programs when their parents reached out to us and asked us to find a mentor for their child. Today, many of the 1300 children on our waiting list are there precisely because their parents believe that a mentor can make a positive difference in the life of their child, and so have asked for our help.

But, as we have expanded our programs, we have learned that some of the children who need our help most are those who are NOT on our waiting list. And, in these cases, we actively recruit children by talking to parents, grandparents, and other caregivers. In these cases, we look for children who have already begun to demonstrate some of the patterns of behavior that indicate future problems—patterns of truancy or delinquency, for instance, or children who are the victims or perpetrators of violence. Our Amachi program, which targets children who have a parent in prison, is a prime example of this sort of outreach to children who might otherwise not be enrolled in our programs.

Today, we serve children from 6-18—though our strong preference is to match children before the age of 13. Based on census estimates of the number of children living at or below poverty level, we estimate that there are over 80,000 children in Philadelphia who would be classified as "at-risk" because of these factors.

As we have grown over the years—more than doubling the number of children we serve annually since 2002—we have had to spend more time recruiting mentors for our programs. We know we need to match more of the children on our waiting list. Just last week, one of our local newspaper columnists did a story on a 13-year old Nasheed, who was just matched with a Big Brother. Nasheed has been on our waiting list since he was 8. As a result of that story, we have had nearly 50 inquiries from individuals interested

in becoming a Big Brother. We are working to highlight the need and the value of mentoring so that more men like Nasheed's new Big Brother Nathaniel Tillman step up.

We are aggressively reaching out in our neighborhoods—in churches, colleges, businesses, and social organizations to inspire people to share their lives with children and to become mentors. We have partnerships with over 60 local churches and congregations, and draw mentors from the church members. Our recruiting team works with these churches and with other fraternal and social organizations to engage them as mentors. We work with colleges and universities to encourage students to become Big Brothers and Big Sisters to children in elementary and middle schools near the college campus. Corporations support us by encouraging their employees to become mentors as well. We started new programs with Cigna and Wawa, where children go to these corporate headquarters to meet their "Bigs". And, In fact, we are working with Police Commissioner Johnson and Fire Commissioner Lloyd Akers to recruit mentors from their ranks. We have a continuing need for African-American men to become mentors, and are implementing targeted recruiting efforts to address this need.

The obstacles are often tied to lack of visibility and understanding about what is required of a mentor. We work to counter the image that a person has to be a "saint" or a CEO in order to be a good mentor by emphasizing that everyone has experiences, insights, and interests that are valuable for children. In fact, we are currently working on campaigns to emphasize that the "average joe" has so much to offer children. We're not looking for perfection—we're looking for good people who are willing to commit to spending time with a child.

The BBBS model of mentoring has been around for over 100 years. We know how to make mentoring work so that the relationships between a child and adult are safe, strong, and impactful. We know that the way to build strong, safe, and impactful relationships is through careful screening of mentors and through professional support of the relationships after the match is made. The P/PV research on mentoring emphasizes that mentoring works when the mentors, children, and family are supported by professional staff according to the BBBS model. The worst thing an organization can do is to make a match and walk away—the BBBS mentoring model works because our staff is there to provide insight, guidance, and advice as the mentoring relationship develops through different stages. Asking our volunteers to commit to meeting with their Little Brother or Little Sister regularly for a period of a year is important: both our own experience and multiple research studies confirm a correlation between positive impact and the length and regularity of the mentoring relationship. And, for each volunteer who commits to spending time with a child, we also commit to doing what we can to help keep the mentoring relationship strong. And we are pleased that, currently, 63% of our nearly 2100 open matches have lasted 12 months or longer.

We know there will continue to be challenges. Steady, reliable funding is a perpetual source of concern for us and other organizations serving children. But in a city where millions are spent on incarceration, surely we can find the financial and political will to ensure the future of our children. The reality is that mentoring is a cost-effective intervention—the cost of making and professionally supporting a one-to-one relationship for a year is a mere fraction of the cost of juvenile incarceration.

Beyond prioritizing mentoring through funding, there are policies on the Federal, State, and local levels that would enable BBBS to reach more kids. If governmental agencies gave their employees work release time to be mentors it would open up an enormous resource in potential volunteers. In Twin Cities, Minnesota, for instance, a partnership between the county government and the local Big Brothers Big Sisters affiliate does just this—and the County is enthusiastic about the possibility of making a difference in the lives of children BEFORE they enter the system. In Pennsylvania and throughout the nation, our affiliates would benefit greatly from a fast, effective, and low-cost system to screen potential mentors for child abuse incidents. The system in Pennsylvania, for instance, is cumbersome, slow, and low-tech—and because we will not match a volunteer until the Child Abuse Clearance comes back clean, we are slowed in our work because of this antiquated system. We dream of the day when potential volunteers can submit their information online and have their clearance sent to us electronically!

In Philadelphia, we have benefited from our relationship with the City and the School District. We would not be able to serve the thousands of children we do each year without this support. The challenges we face—a need for more African-American male mentors, unpredictable funding streams, increasing demands for documentation and overlap of databases/reporting from different funders—are challenges faced by non-profits and BBBS agencies everywhere. But, we need to balance new initiatives with the tried and true. And we need to focus on results—and on effective ways for collecting and sharing information about impact, results, and challenges.

Today, as this hearing is convened, we urge the continued commitment to mentoring as part of a multi-pronged approach to the challenges facing youth in our community. The positive impact of mentoring is more critical now than ever. We know mentoring works. BBBS mentoring is classified as a "Blueprint" program by the University of Colorado: as such, it is one of 11 model intervention programs (out of 600 programs reviewed) **shown to be effective in reducing adolescent violent crime, aggression, delinquency, and substance abuse**.

Go to www.bbbssepa.org or call 1-888-412-BIGS. As a recent article by Elmer Smith in the Philadelphia Daily News pointed out, being a mentor is a matter of taking the time to make a difference. And we encourage everyone in our community to stand up and provide the leadership that children so desperately need. On behalf of Big Brothers Big Sisters Southeastern PA, thank you for this opportunity to present testimony.

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Testimony of David Fair
Vice President for Community Impact
United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania

U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee
Public Hearing on Youth Violence and Mentoring
Pennsylvania Convention Center
February 19, 2007

Good morning.

Thank you for this opportunity to come before you on behalf of the Board of Directors of United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania, our 120,000 annual donors and our over 50,000 volunteers dedicated to improving the quality of life of all of the residents of southeastern Pennsylvania.

Since 1921, our United Way has raised and invested several billion dollars of financial contributions and countless hours of volunteer energy to relieve the pain and suffering of vulnerable people throughout our region. And in those 86 years we have learned again and again a very obvious lesson:

We as a community have a much easier time despairing that problems facing our community are intractable than we do in making the effort to actually solve them.

We commend Sen. Specter and the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee for taking leadership in this hearing today to help us focus on real solutions that have a proven track record, not only in reducing the level of violence in our community, but also in assuring our young people of a future in which they can be successful and self-reliant. For too long we have invested both taxpayer and charitable dollars in experimenting with ever-new approaches to the same old problems, while failing to direct adequate resources to the strategies that have already been shown to work in today's world.

Mentoring of children and adolescents - assuring that each and every child has a mature adult in their lives to look up to, to learn from, and (dare I say it?) to even teach - is one of those rare approaches that has a strong academic backing and also makes common sense. All of us in this room who believe we've had some measure of success in our lives know that it's true - that there was some grownup, whether it was a parent, a relative, a teacher, a neighbor, or somebody we met down at the

rec center or at our summer job, who helped us through our growing pains and who was there for us when we thought no one would be.

As you've heard this morning, there is a wealth of evidence that by increasing the opportunity for a young person to bond with a caring adult we can make miracles happen. Yet despite the fact that we know this to be true, we continue to not do enough to make sure those relationships are encouraged, supported and adequately resourced.

And we are suffering the consequences.

Despite some signs of progress earlier in this decade, in Philadelphia we have recently been making a U-turn in our efforts to assure a safe and stable environment for our children to grow up in. Philadelphia's children and youth are facing ever-greater challenges to their future success as adults, and as parents of the region's next generation.

A few years ago in Philadelphia we were proclaiming a major reduction in the number of serious child abuse cases reported in our city - almost a 1/3rd reduction between 1996 and 2004. But now the number of reported cases of serious abuse is rising again.

After consistent reductions in the number of children we were placing in foster care and delinquency facilities over several years, we are now returning to the approach that the only solution to threats to family life is to take the children away from their families and put them somewhere else. And not only are we increasing the placement of children in foster homes, group homes and institutions, but the proportion of those placements occurring among older youth has also skyrocketed - from less than 20% in 2001 to over 50% today.

Similarly, the number of arrests of juveniles for serious crimes dropped by 22% between 2000 and 2004. It's now going up again, but perhaps of more concern, the proportion of those arrests related to violent crime is rising even faster. Other indicators - the number of youth placed in delinquent facilities, the well-publicized increase in the number of homicides claiming juvenile victims as well as the increase in the number of juvenile perpetrators of homicide, the vast increase in the number of petitions for misconduct filed in our Family Court system annually - all show that after several years of positive results, the clock is turning back.

Before I came to United Way in late 2005, I had worked for almost ten years in city government in the behavioral health, child welfare and juvenile justice systems. In that time, I and my colleagues oversaw the expenditure of billions of dollars every year. But because of the play of a variety of forces, most of that money is spent, not in preventing the situations that lead to violence, but in ineffective temporary fixes and the haphazard symptom relief.

In the behavioral health world, we focus on new methods of treatment with only a small nod to recovery from mental illness and addiction.

In the child abuse world, we focus on protecting children after they had been threatened, rather than preventing the threat in the first place.

In the juvenile justice world, we tend to warehouse and punish children in trouble rather than take full advantage of the opportunity they are giving us to show them a better way while we still have a real chance.

In each of these areas, we've always recognized the importance of mentoring as an essential component of any solution-focused effort to help our children. But because of regulations, politics, habit - when it came to spending the money, priority has always had to be given to hiring and supporting more and more professional staff to do what we used to rely on families and communities to accomplish.

United Way defines its overarching mission as "mobilizing the caring power of people to improve lives."

We believe that solutions to the problems of youth violence can best be found in those families and communities.

We believe that being more creative and supportive of the variety of approaches we mean when we use the word "mentoring" will provide the foundation we need to make that effort stronger and more effective. We are committed to redoubling our efforts to build that foundation through our leadership, our fundraising, and our call on everyone, in government and out, to action.

As you've heard today, there has been significant research on a variety of mentoring approaches and what makes them work and

what undermines their effectiveness. Of course, we need to continue to study these efforts and learn from them. But we don't have to wait for more studies to know what we need to do.

Expansion of quality programs matching adult and peer mentors to youth, such as those demonstrated by Big Brothers Big Sisters and others, is needed in all parts of our region.

United Way believes we also need to find new approaches to offering mentoring support that fit with today's urban realities. Traditional mentoring models, while still effective for many youth, sometimes fall short in helping today's highest-risk youth face the many complicated challenges and obstacles that limit their chances for future success.

We are increasingly concerned about the shortage of male mentors and mentors of color, at the difficulties many mentors have in relating to and supporting more troubled youth, at the resistance many young people have to trusting mentors because of bad experiences with other adults, and at the lack of resources at hand to be more creative in defining what a mentor is and ways of mentoring that are designed for today's world. As we've heard, more and more of our young people are facing more serious and numerous risks, and the mentoring they need is much more complicated than it used to be; more and more of our adult mentors are finding they can't handle the challenges presented by their mentees because they have not been adequately trained or did not realize what they were getting into. Even our best mentoring initiatives, such as those led by Big Brothers Big Sisters, are relieved when they can successfully match mentors with mentees in relationships that last at least one year - but data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health showed that for a mentoring relationship to have a life-long positive impact, it needs to last for as long as *nine* years.

In addition to preserving and protecting what has been created, it is clear that we need to establish a greater dynamic aimed at dramatically expanding, enhancing and improving this work. We need to accept that, at least for those youth at higher risk of committing or being victimized by violence, we need to do more than set up more opportunities for volunteer adults to play only a glancing role in the lives of the youth they are trying to help.

Mentoring is not about hanging out, and it's no longer about simply providing a way for kids to get to ball games they might not have been able to get to on their own.

We need to be serious, treat mentoring as a serious intervention, support real standards of quality, and provide serious amounts of money and attention.

We have an urgent need to create a much larger cadre of mentors that is serious about this work, is willing to learn new ways of engaging and working with their mentees, and comes from the communities where the youth live.

We need to make sure that these mentors learn the skills they need to overcome the barriers that keep them from being more effective with their mentees and discourage them from sticking it out when the child tests their commitment.

We need community organizations to find more effective ways to nurture and support both mentors and mentees in what for both can be among the most important relationships they ever have.

United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania has embarked on a campaign, which we call our Campaign for Mentors, to support new partnerships around mentoring so that the concept of a caring adult for every child regardless of their circumstances is something we can take for granted as part of our community and family life.

This is not going to be easy. Today's young people are not growing up in the world that most of us did.

I grew up being afraid of brass knuckles and a kick in the pants. Today, the increased availability of guns to young people has been matched by their increased willingness to use violence to achieve their goals. Standing up for oneself, and using force to maintain "respect," are essential elements of what is sometimes called the "code of the streets." Study after study has shown that for kids who grow up with and live by this code, it is unthinkable to walk away from a fight.

Physical confrontations have always been a part of adolescence in our society. But if both parties are armed, the result is too often deadly. Research has shown that the realization that many youth on the street are carrying a weapon increases the potential for an immediate and exaggerated response to real or perceived threats. As we've read all too often in recent years in our daily newspapers, even trivial disputes can end in death when guns are involved.

It's sad but true that this behavior also results from "mentoring," of a sort. Adults model or even facilitate much of this behavior. Although many young people benefit from the influence of a responsible, caring adult, others are led down a different path. The principal commodities of violence -- drugs, alcohol, and firearms -- are produced by adults, as is the media that glorifies them.

We're not ignorant of these realities but we are somehow disconnected from our power to do something about them. Why do we prefer to build enough prison space for 15,000 Philadelphians to be incarcerated every year, but are dumbfounded about what to do about the 13,000 who stop regularly attending school? Why do we wait for a teenager to be murdered before we realize that we could have helped them when they started having behavior problems in the 5th grade? Why does what we know from science and research about the confluence of psychological, social and spiritual factors that make some young people become violent seem so little reflected in our public policy and in how we invest tax dollars in addressing these issues?

We often respond to the crisis facing so many of our children as if it was a forest fire. As you may know, there's a couple of ways to fight a forest fire. You can put it out, or you can set up a firebreak. A firebreak creates a barrier around the fire so it doesn't spread. Then you wait for the fire to burn itself out.

When it comes to the violence that so many of our children grow up in today, too many of us have decided not to put out the fire, but to set up a firebreak and let the victims burn.

At United Way, we are suggest a new approach.

As part of our new plan for making a real impact on the community, which we are calling our *Agenda for Community Solutions,* United Way is pursuing a range of strategies aimed at mobilizing the caring power of our communities to put a stop to the violence facing our children.

In the public policy arena, we are calling on the various public systems of care - public health, mental health, substance abuse treatment, child welfare, juvenile justice, youth development - to recognize that quality mentoring can be an essential tool that they each must use to achieve their objectives for the people they serve.

In the field of mentoring, we seek to create new and stronger training of mentors, especially those working with children with intensive challenges, help programs meet higher standards, and develop stronger networks of support for mentors so that they can keep their own hope alive even when their mentees try their patience and commitment.

In the community, we are investing in new strategies to recruit mentors, especially mentors of color and male mentors who are in short supply. We are facilitating unique partnerships - for example, a project in Germantown that brings together youth from Germantown Public High School and Germantown Friends School, a preparatory private school, in a theater project to help erode class and cultural barriers that have been known to feed tension and violence in that neighborhood; another project with the Philadelphia Mural Arts Project and the Philadelphia Police Department, bringing together police officers with troubled youth in creating public art in the neighborhood in which they work and live; yet another project that supports high school sophomores in mentoring children from a neighborhood middle school, so that the middle school child can have a senior champion once they arrive at high school.

I mentioned some previous experience in the behavioral health field, and one thing I learned from those days was how important hope and expectation are to the success of psychotherapy. I think that is also true about mentoring.

We ask that we choose to invest in hope for our children rather than in simply managing their pain.

We ask that we don't just build a firebreak and let the fire burn.

We know we have it within us to put the fire out.

Thank you.

Testimony
Presented to:
U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing on Mentoring and Community-Based Solutions to Delinquency and Youth violence
Senator Arlen Specter, Ranking Member
February 19, 2007
10:00AM

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Through the school system, the character of which, in spite of itself, the university determines and in a large measure controls . . . through the school system every family in this entire broad land of ours is brought into touch with the university; for from it proceeds the teachers or the teachers' teachers.

William Rainey Harper, *The University and Democracy* (1899)

We prepare teachers for the public schools, and we admit their students. *So it is our problem just as much as theirs.*

Donald N. Langenberg, Chancellor, University System of Maryland
The Chronicle of Higher Education (November 20, 1998)

. . .It is my firm conviction that the great universities of the 21st century *will be judged* by their ability to help solve our most urgent social problems.

William R. Greiner, President, State University of New York, Buffalo
Universities and Community Schools (1994)

To be a great university, we must first be a great *local* university.

Shirley Strum Kenny, President, State University of New York, Stony Brook
New York Times (August, 18,1999)

No one mistakes Penn for an ivory tower. And no one ever will.
Through our collaborative engagement with communities all over the world, Penn is poised—and I think uniquely poised—to advance the central values of democracy in a great urban city: life, liberty, opportunity, and mutual respect.
Effective engagement of these values begins right here at home. We cherish our relations with our neighbors, relationships that have strengthened Penn academically and...have strengthened the vitality of West Philadelphia....

Amy Gutmann, President, University of Pennsylvania
Inaugural Address, "The Penn Compact," (October 2004)

Truly democratic partnerships between universities and schools are a powerful strategy for changing communities, schools, and higher education itself—and for reducing youth violence. The partnerships described below represent the fruits of over two decades of collaboration between the University of Pennsylvania (Penn), community organizations, and the public schools in West Philadelphia. Penn's Center for Community Partnerships (CCP) together with community partners have created university-assisted community schools that are centers of education and engagement that provide a range of services for students, their parents, and other community members. This approach works toward tapping, integrating, mobilizing, and galvanizing the resources of communities, including colleges and universities, to improve the community, the school, and the education of students.

Somewhat more specifically, the strategy assumes that like colleges and universities, public schools can function as environment-changing institutions and can become the strategic centers of broad-based partnerships that genuinely engage and coordinate a wide variety of community organizations and institutions. Public schools "belong" to all members of the community. They are particularly well suited, therefore, to function as neighborhood "hubs" or "nodes" around which local partnerships and youth programs can be generated and formed. When they play that role, schools function as community institutions *par excellence*; they then provide a decentralized, democratic, community-based response to significant community problems and help young people make positive contributions to the community and learn better (and at increasingly higher levels) through action-oriented, collaborative, community-based problem-solving.

Begun in 1985 by Penn and its school and community partners, the university-assisted community schools program now involves over 6,000 children and youth, parents, and community members each year at its six primary sites in West Philadelphia. Additional school day, after school, family and community programming reach several thousand more individuals. Through collaboration between school, university, and community partners, each university-assisted community school site has a variety of *locally determined* activities and partnerships, often with a focus on health, environment, or arts and culture. The programs engage students (K-16+) in *real world, hands on, community problem solving* that is integrated into the school curriculum as well as through extended day, weekend, and summer programs.

Young people at each of these schools are engaged in creative work designed to advance their skills, abilities and personal and social development through service to their school, families and community. At Penn, students and faculty are also engaged in service learning that entails the development and application of knowledge to solve local problems along with active reflection on the impact of their work. Currently, over 150 such courses have been offered (57 in the 2006-07 academic year), engaging more than 60 faculty members from an array of disciplines. More than 1400 students participated in academically based community service (i.e., problem solving service learning) courses in the 2005-2006 academic year. Penn students support all aspects of the university-assisted community school program by assisting in its evening, weekend, extended-day, and school day programs.

The Sayre High School-Penn University-Assisted Community School Initiative

The Sayre High School-Penn university-assisted community school initiative provides an example of how these principles have been put into practice. The principal of Sayre School first approached Penn's Center for Community Partnerships with the idea that having a health center on site would be a boon to the students and the community. How to galvanize the necessary resources was a major hurdle. Then, in the spring and summer of 2002, a group of Penn undergraduates in an academically based community service (ABCS) seminar focused their efforts on helping to solve the healthcare crisis in West Philadelphia. The students' research and work with the community led them to propose establishment of a community health promotion and disease prevention program at a public school in West Philadelphia, the Sayre Middle

School. Their research proved to be so compelling that it led to the development of a school-based Community Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Program at Sayre Middle School (In 2006-2007, Sayre completed a three-year transition and became a high school.)

The school-based Community Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Program at the Sayre School was formally launched in January of 2003. It functions as the central component of a university-assisted community school designed both to advance student learning and democratic development, as well as to help strengthen families and institutions within the community. The multidisciplinary character of the Sayre Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Program (SHPDPP) enables it to be integrated into the curriculum and co-curriculum of both the public school and the university, assuring an educational focus as well as sustainability of the program. To support this aim, Penn faculty and students from across the University now work at Sayre through new and existing courses, internships, and research projects. As an outcome of the integration of health promotion and service activities in the curriculum, Sayre students serve as *agents* of healthcare change in the Sayre neighborhood.

A considerable number and variety of Penn academically based community service courses provide the resources and support that make it possible to operate, sustain, and develop the SHPDPP. Literally hundreds of Penn students (professional, graduate and undergraduate) and some twenty faculty members, from a wide range of Penn schools and departments, work at Sayre. Since they are performing community service while engaged in academic research, teaching and learning, they are simultaneously practicing their specialized skills and developing, to some extent at least, their moral and civic consciousness and democratic character. And since they are engaged in a highly integrated common project, they are also learning how to communicate, interact, and collaborate with each other in unprecedented ways, which have broadened their academic horizons

In spring of 2004, the SHPDPP established a community board to apply to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for funding to create a federally qualified health center. The application was successful, and the Sayre health clinic opened in 2006 to serve students, their families, and other community members.

The Dean of Penn Medicine, Arthur Rubenstein, recognized the potential of the SHPDPP when he appointed Bernett L. Johnson, Jr., M.D. to the newly created position of Senior Associate Dean for Diversity and Community Outreach in the School of Medicine. Dr. Johnson,

a Professor of Dermatology and the Senior Medical Officer of the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, had played the key role in engaging the Medical School with the Sayre project, recruiting students, residents, house staff, and faculty to contribute to various health education and health promotion activities

For example, Sayre eleventh graders in an Intake Medical Procedures course work with Penn students learning how to perform the basics of intake medical procedures (blood pressure, height and weight, glucose, reflex, vision, etc.). Sayre students also learn about prominent community health concerns (hypertension, obesity, diabetes, etc.) and will gain clinical experience by operating an after school health monitoring clinic. When the health clinic opens its permanent facility in Summer 2007, Sayre students will work with Penn doctors and nurses, health professional students, and community members to provide basic intake services, medical information, and referrals.

The Sayre-Penn model extends student learning and positive youth development into out of school time as well—the time when crimes by youth are most often committed. With Sayre as a site for a city-funded Beacon and a 21st Century Community Learning Center (21C-CLC), the building is open to students of all ages to participate in a myriad of academic, enrichment, and fitness activities, carrying the school day health focus into after school programs, offering a safe space to youth of all ages. A Community Advisory Board oversees the Beacon/21C-CLC, and staff from Penn's Center for Community Partnerships (CCP) coordinate the activities. Sayre represents a unique and highly effective integration of city, community, and university resources that aims to enhance the educational, recreational, health related opportunities, and improve the overall quality of life of the students at Sayre High School, its feeder schools, and the surrounding community. Examples of program activities include:

- The K-8 Project Based After School Program, staffed by Penn students, serves over eighty youth from Sayre's feeder elementary and middle schools, providing a safe space daily between 3:00 and 7:00 p.m.
- The 9-12 Grade After School Program combines elements of academic support, college and career mentoring, real-world job experience/training, and extracurricular activities. These programs engage over one hundred high school students and their families. Several activities are highlighted below:
    - Early College Planning (ECP): Penn undergraduates mentor 9th and 10th graders to plan

for a successful high school career and beyond.

- Let's Get Ready! assists 11th graders with the college process and preparing for the SAT's.
- Youth Job Corps employs over thirty Sayre students as peer health educators, after school instructors for K-8 program, and in community organizing and asset mapping.

- Sayre's evening community programming includes Family Fitness Nights, run by Penn staff and students twice a week. Nearly 100 community members participate in recreational, self-improvement, education, and health classes at no charge to them.
- The Saturday Basketball League (boys and girls age thirteen and under) is led by Penn undergraduates. The league also holds practices and tutoring sessions Mondays through Fridays after school.
- The Sayre Beacon Pride Summer Camp involves over 120 community children age five to twelve in educational, recreational, and enrichment activities five days a week, as well as high school youth as camp counselors.

Most recently, as issues of youth violence have flared in Philadelphia, the Sayre-Penn university-assisted community school has begun to address these issues more directly. The following are several examples of recent developments:

- CCP is working closely with the District Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell to coordinate and implement a Safe Corridors program to be staffed by community volunteers. The Beacon Youth Council (12 Sayre student leaders) is also working with Penn students, using GIS technology, to map local "safe havens."
- The community school staff is organizing parents, community leaders and local groups to assist in efforts to address neighborhood violence.
- The District Attorney's Office, DHS, the School District, the City, and the University are supporting anti-truancy initiatives, through the REACH (Real Every Day Alternatives—Choices and Help) program.

The preceding examples illustrate some of the ways in which Penn's CCP has coordinated University-wide efforts in partnership with the community in order to create and develop community school programs. The Sayre program, which is very much in its early days, is the most ambitious project. It aims to become a university-assisted community school with a comprehensive community problem solving curriculum and community-wide program that is fully integrated across both the Sayre curriculum and the curriculum of a number of Penn's

schools. The work at Sayre demonstrates that higher education can become a *permanent anchor* for revitalizing schools and communities and advancing student learning and development if the vast resources it possesses, particularly its faculty, students, and staff, are brought to bear in a coordinated fashion. The Penn-Sayre project further demonstrates that when universities such as Penn give very high priority to actively solving strategic, real-world, complex problems in and with their local community, a much greater likelihood exists that they will significantly advance the public good and realize their own potential.

Conclusion

In summary, university-assisted community schools serve, educate, and activate students, their families, and other local residents. *Students not only learn by doing, but also learn by and for service.* Simultaneously, the university benefits from the unique, critical opportunities community schools provide for learning, research, civic consciousness, outreach, and program development. Putting this theory into practice, the Sayre-Penn university-assisted community school initiative appears to hold promise for West Philadelphia, Penn, and other communities and universities across the country. (Penn's University-Assisted Community School Replication Project, to date, has included twenty-two colleges and universities and their school and community partners; teams from an additional seventy-five higher education institutions have been trained on the model.) To speed and advance the development of university-assisted community schools as a vehicle to make our schools and communities safer for students, teachers, parents, neighbors and businesses, the Federal government could:

1. Develop and apply innovative funding strategies that provide support to broad-based local coalitions designed to develop and sustain university-assisted community schools.
2. Create a multi-agency federal commission designed to advance and implement university-assisted community schools.
3. Strengthen and expand community-based work-study to engage more college students with local public schools.

I want to applaud Senator Specter and the Senate Judiciary Committee for holding this most important hearing. Thank you for your time and interest.

Testimony of Sylvester Johnson
Police Commissioner City of Philadelphia
Before the Judiciary Committee Regarding Mentoring and Community Based Solutions to Delinquency and Youth Violence
February 19, 2007

Good morning Senator Specter and other members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. My name is Sylvester Johnson and I am the Police Commissioner here in Philadelphia.

First, thank you for inviting me to this hearing on delinquency and youth violence. As you can tell by this panel, this subject is critically important to the City as a whole. As a government, we must come together to protect our children from violence, but just as important from resorting to violence. There is no higher duty for me personally and for all of government. So I thank you for allowing me to be a part of these proceedings.

At the beginning, let me state clearly, I believe that law enforcement should be the last step in protecting our children. I say this because by the time a child comes to the attention of the police, the damage may already be done. I strongly believe we need to address the social failures that cause children to resort to crime and violence. We need to address the factors that create such hopelessness and lack of respect in our children.

Obviously, I don't have all the answers, but what I do know is that many children who become victims, criminals or both come from broken homes. Sometimes there are

no parents at all, the parents are in jail or they're addicted to drugs. Is it any surprise that these children turn to violence and crime themselves?

Everyone agrees we need to target those children at risk of becoming victims or killers and the YVRP is an outstanding partnership among government agencies that does just that. In fact, John Delaney from the District Attorney's Office was a founding partner of that program and I commend him for all his hard work. But regrettably, we found that violent offenders were getting younger and younger. The YVRP was originally designed to target at risk-children from ages 14 to 24, but we have children as young as 9 and 10 becoming victims and killers as well. So, the YVRP has spun off another similar program called the Adolescent Violence Reduction Program (AVRP) to reach those at risk as young as 8 years old.

Let me state clearly, I fully believe in and support these programs. They save lives - plain and simple! But I must state, the children in these programs have been targeted because they have already been involved with the police or been victims. What we truly need is less children targeted for intervention! We need to work together as a community to give our children the love, compassion, support and guidance every child craves. This will take strong leaders in government who are willing to invest in programs that will not provide immediate results.

The problem with our children did not occur overnight, nor will the solution. We need to explore innovative ways to instill the hope and self worth into our children that

will last a lifetime. Historically, this was the role of the family, but the family, as we know it, no longer exists for far too many of our children. So, we must explore alternatives that will provide the nurturing environment every child requires. I believe the social failures at this point in a child's life are where the violence and delinquency begins.

As I said at the beginning, there is no higher duty for government than protecting our children, but I believe law enforcement should be the last line of defense. The first line of defense is finding a way to create a caring and supportive environment for each and every child in Philadelphia.

Thank you.

Testimony of
Wendy McClanahan
Vice President for Research
Public/Private Ventures (P/PV)
February 19, 2007

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Wendy McClanahan, and I am Vice President for Research at Public/Private Ventures, a national nonprofit organization headquartered in Philadelphia. Our mission is to improve the effectiveness of social policies, programs and community initiatives, especially as they affect youth and young adults. We do this by identifying or developing promising approaches to critical social problems, by rigorously evaluating these approaches and, when suitable, by replicating them in new communities.

Like other stakeholders, P/PV is deeply concerned about violent crime, which is on the rise in many of our nation's cities. Homicides in urban areas have increased by 5.7% in a single year. In Philadelphia, homicide was up by 15% in 2005 (the greatest number of homicides in eight years) and, unfortunately, this increase looks like it might be the start of a trend.

Many have expressed hope that mentoring can play a role in reducing violent crime. For more than 15 years, P/PV has been investigating the value of mentoring as a strategy to improve the lives of young people. In our pivotal report on the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, titled *Making a Difference*, we presented evidence—persuasive evidence, derived from a rigorous random assignment study—that well-designed mentoring programs could measurably decrease negative behaviors and increase positive behaviors among young people.

In a series of projects over the past decade, P/PV has extended its research into mentoring programs in a variety of service environments, including its impact on crime and violence, and has added to the findings about mentoring's potential. For today's panel, I would characterize the findings from this work as follows: Mentoring offers real promise in reducing violence among children, youth and young adults. But there are important qualifications that are essential to understanding both the value, and the limitations, of mentoring.

Some of the positive findings from P/PV's work are indeed heartening. We saw:

- A reduction in homicides in districts using a comprehensive program for violence-prone youngsters—Philadelphia's Youth Violence Reduction Partnership;
- Decreased recidivism rates in an employment-oriented program for adult ex-prisoners—a federally sponsored initiative called Ready4Work;

- Lower incidence of depression among youth in a program for justice-system-involved juveniles—the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth, also federally supported;
- Less violent behavior and substance use (and more positive school outcomes and relationships) among youngsters mentored in the nationally recognized Big Brothers Big Sisters Program; and
- A significant reduction in child abuse and neglect and in subsequent criminal behavior of both mothers and their children, among participants in the Nurse-Family Partnership, a home-visiting program for first-time, low-income mothers.

Findings such as these should rightfully inform decisions about national and local intervention policies, and the role of mentoring in particular. That is all to the good. However, the qualifications—significant ones—all too often are overlooked or minimized. The result may be that there is too much "mentoring" of a kind and quality that in the end is unlikely to help young people, and too much inflated rhetoric about mentoring that may hinder the design of effective policies.

I want to emphasize three qualifications in particular that we need to keep in mind, based on P/PV's research.

First, mentoring is not a cure-all social intervention or a magic bullet. Particularly for very high-risk populations—for the criminally involved adolescents and young adults we are concerned with today—P/PV's research suggests that mentoring alone isn't an answer.

These young people bring rough histories, little trust and numerous challenges to the table. Multiple supports and services, in well-crafted program settings, are essential to alter, even slightly, the trajectories of their lives. In the Ready4Work program, for instance, mentoring did appear to contribute to improved outcomes. But there also was intensive case management, wraparound services and job placement assistance—a dense web of support that gave mentoring relationships the opportunity to take root.

Similarly, the mentoring that took place in the Youth Violence Reduction Partnership was accompanied by regular supervision from parole or probation officers. The mentors in the program were full-time employees—paid street workers—who could meet regularly and at all hours with participants. It was the intensity of the overall service package, P/PV believes, that helped reduce the incidence of violent behaviors.

Second, just as there aren't free lunches, mentoring is not the cost-free social program it often is made out to be. The experience of Big Brothers Big Sisters makes it clear that the costs of good screening, training and ongoing professional

support are far from negligible. In programs that use paid street workers or paid counselors, the costs are even higher.

But the need for strong supports is paramount. P/PV's work suggests that a solid support apparatus is crucial for mentors of high-risk adolescents and young adults. These costs are likely far lower than the costs of long-term incarceration. But they're still a real expense—one that is too often downplayed in discussions of mentoring.

Third, mentoring isn't easy, either as a programmatic task or a personal commitment. For programs, there is the continuing challenge of finding enough individuals prepared to dedicate the time and energy to building a relationship, and matching them with the right mentee. When that "mentee" is a high-risk youth or a young adult returning from incarceration, finding suitable and willing volunteers—and keeping them—is a serious challenge.

The Ready4Work program, despite strenuous and sustained efforts by its staff, was able to match mentors to only about half of the participants. That's understandable: people are often hesitant when they're asked to build and sustain a relationship with a young ex-prisoner.

And there are other challenges. The ex-offender himself—or herself—may have no interest in having a mentor. Family and work pressures for both mentor and mentee can subvert the delicate process of personal contact and trust-building. Or the mentor, once he or she has gone some distance into the relationship, may feel overmatched, inadequate or overwhelmed, and withdraw.

We also need to be mindful of the larger reality: with these high-risk populations, even our most striking statistical successes are modest. Recidivism rates may be reduced, but remain too high; homicides and violent behavior are lessened, but by too little. Despite these caveats, our successes are real and substantial. P/PV's work to date has established that mentoring can contribute to measurable benefits in a variety of settings, including programs for high-risk youth, violence-prone youth and ex-prisoners—perhaps the most difficult and challenging populations in the human service field.

The deep and manifold challenges these young people present mean that mentoring alone will not suffice. We need rich interventions that address multiple challenges with multiple supports and services of uniformly high quality. In programmatic settings such as these, the potential of mentoring—and other sustained, authentic and supportive relationships—will be most fully realized.

Youth Violence Reduction Partnership

The Youth Violence Reduction Partnership (YVRP) aims to reduce youth homicide in Philadelphia's most violent neighborhoods. It specifically targets those deemed by initiative partners as "most likely to kill or be killed" in five of the deadliest Philadelphia police districts, including the 22nd, 24th, and 25th districts in North Philadelphia, the 12th district in southwest Philadelphia, and the 19th district in West Philadelphia. Targeted youth are between the ages of 14 to 24 years, and most have been convicted or adjudicated on a violent or drug-related charge at least once.

YVRP is a collaborative effort that involves law enforcement, city agencies and nonprofit organizations. Specifically, the partners in this multi-agency effort include the District Attorney's Office, the Department of Juvenile Probation, the Department of Adult Probation, the Police Department, the Philadelphia Anti-Drug Anti-Violence Network (PAAN), Philadelphia Safe and Sound, The School District of Philadelphia, and Public/Private Ventures (P/PV). Through its partnering agencies, YVRP takes a two-pronged approach, providing both increased supervision and increased support to its participants, known as "youth partners" (YP's):

1. *Supervision*: YP's are assigned to probation officers who are themselves specifically assigned to YVRP. This special group of probation officers is given significantly lighter caseloads (often half the size of those for typical probation officers) in exchange for the opportunity to spend time outside of the office meeting with their probationers, usually at their homes, school or work. In addition, the program also promotes heightened scrutiny by law enforcement agencies and intensive supervision by both police and probation officers, including joint police-probation patrols, zero tolerance for drug use and gun possession, and an expedited judicial process for those youth who violate the terms of their probation.

2. *Support*: Prior research has indicated that increased supervision is inadequate in making permanent changes to youth's criminal behavior. As such, YP's are also given increased positive supports through the role of paraprofessionals known as "streetworkers." Streetworkers fill many roles including mentor, counselor and friend. They also provide both tangible (e.g., rides to job interviews, assistance in purchasing attire for job interviews, information regarding community resources and programs offering developmental opportunities like GED programs) and intangible support (e.g., guidance and advice).

YVRP line staff (which sum to a staff of more than 50 police officers, probation officers and streetworkers) aim to meet with participants and their families more than 25 times per month. Several levels of partnership supervision exist in order to ensure that coordination and accountability remain constant over time. A steering committee, which consists of senior-level executives from each agency, meets quarterly to review strategy, develop funding and intercede with organizations outside the partnership. In addition, a

mid-level management team meets monthly to deal with inter-agency issues and to review performance data and adherence to benchmarks (i.e., minimum standards) within the partnership, using monitoring data collected on a monthly basis. Finally, an Operations Committee of about 20 first-level supervisors from the partnering agencies meets weekly to select candidates for intervention and to review recent shootings and arrests of youth ages 14-24 in all YVRP districts. At each meeting, a streetworker-probation officer team presents an overview and update about their caseloads, which enables supervisors to monitor individual youth partner cases.

The program has been operational since 1999, beginning in the 24th and 25th police districts. Results from a preliminary evaluation conducted by P/PV in these two police districts, for which an adequate amount of time had passed to judge trends in district- and city-level homicides over time, suggest that it may be effective in preventing youth homicides (see *Alive at 25,* McClanahan, 2004, available for free download at www.ppv.org). Analyses examining ten years of homicide data collected from the Philadelphia Police revealed that homicides in the 24th and 25th districts were significantly lower following the inception of YVRP.

Specifically, the average number of quarterly youth homicides declined 50 percent from two youth homicides per quarter to just one youth homicide in the 24th district. The 25th district experienced a similar decline of 59 percent, falling to 3.4 youth homicides per quarter from 5.8. In addition to homicides among youth, the 25th district also saw a significant decline in homicides overall, across all ages. Further, the overall rate of homicide reduction was greater in both YVRP districts than in the city as a whole. Although these positive changes in homicides cannot be conclusively attributed to YVRP, these findings lend preliminary support for the effectiveness of the partnership. A quasi-experimental comparison group study is currently being conducted by P/PV to better assess YVRP's effectiveness as a youth violence prevention strategy.

Ready4Work

In 2003, P/PV and the US Department of Labor (DOL) developed Ready4Work: An Ex-Prisoner, Community and Faith Initiative (see *Just Out*, Jucovy, 2006, and *Ready4Work In Brief*, Farley and Hackman, 2006, available for free download at www.ppv.org). Ready4Work was designed to address the needs of the growing ex-prisoner population and to test the capacity of community- and faith-based organizations to meet those needs. The Ready4Work initiative aimed to strengthen the social networks and supports of participants, increase employment opportunities and/or improve educational outcomes, provide a range of wraparound direct and referral services, and reduce recidivism.

Ready4Work programs provided three core sets of services: employment-related services (e.g., employment-readiness training and job placement); mentoring (group or one-on-one mentoring); and intensive case management, including referrals for housing, health care, drug treatment and other programs. Juvenile Ready4Work focused on providing case management, mentoring, education and employment services to juvenile returnees. Over a period of three years, 11 adult sites (East Harlem, NY; Philadelphia; Washington, DC; Chicago; Detroit; Milwaukee; Houston; Jacksonville; Memphis; Los Angeles; and Oakland) and 7 juvenile sites (Brooklyn, NY; Camden, NJ; Boston; Los Angeles; Houston; New York City; and Seattle) operated Ready4Work programs and built partnerships among local faith, justice, business and social service organizations. Lead agencies included faith-based organizations, secular nonprofits, a mayor's office and a for-profit entity.

Ready4Work targeted 18- to 34-year-old, nonviolent, non-sexual-felony offenders—individuals with the highest risk of recidivism—and enrolled them within 90 days of their release from prison. All participants enrolled voluntarily and could receive services for up to one year. Ready4Work served a predominantly black male population. With an average age of 26, the initiative's participants were younger and more heavily minority than the overall population of ex-prisoners. Half of all participants had been arrested five or more times. A majority had spent more than two years in prison, and almost 25 percent had spent five or more years behind bars. Despite these extensive criminal histories, Ready4Work participants had some advantages when compared with the larger ex-prisoner population: They had slightly higher education rates, and more than half held a full-time job for a year or longer before entering prison. At the same time, more than 50 percent of the participants reported earning half or more of their income from crime the year before they became incarcerated. Across all adult sites, Ready4Work served 4,500 formerly incarcerated individuals.

Outcomes

Program Retention

Participants in Ready4Work remained engaged in the program for a significant period of time: a median of eight months. Only a small proportion left the program during the first few months, while just under 30 percent took advantage of the full 12 months of services.

Employment

Almost 60 percent of all participants held a job for at least one month while they remained in the program. More than 40 percent—and more than 60 percent of enrollees who ever found a job—

remained employed for at least three consecutive months during the program. And almost a third of all participants managed to remain employed for six consecutive months. These accomplishments are impressive given the many barriers these ex-prisoners face.

Recidivism
According to incarceration records available for 8 of the 11 Ready4Work sites, recidivism rates among participants were considerably lower than those reported by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) for a nationally representative population of ex-prisoners. Just 1.9 percent of Ready4Work participants returned to state prison with a new offense within six months of their release (compared with 5 percent nationally), and only 5 percent did so within one year (compared with 10.4 percent nationally).

P/PV was also able to obtain BJS data on a group of ex-prisoners more similar to Ready4Work participants—18- to 34-year-old, African American, nonviolent felons—which provides a more relevant comparison point. Just 2.4 percent of African American felons participating in Ready4Work returned to state prison with a new offense within six months, and 6.3 percent did so within one year. These rates are 52 to 62 percent lower than those for the subsample of ex-prisoners provided by BJS.[1]

Mentoring and R4W

Ready4Work's most innovative aspect may be its mentoring component: Few social programs have attempted to provide adults—much less ex-offenders—with mentors. P/PV set out to examine how mentoring was related to other in-program outcomes, using four sources of information collected throughout the three years of the initiative: site-reported data on program participants; a questionnaire completed by participants; interviews with program staff, participants and mentors; and public incarceration records.[2]

Findings
Participants who met with a mentor at least once remained in the program longer (10.2 months compared to others who left after an average of 7.2 months). Furthermore, participants who received mentoring of any kind in a given month were 70 percent less likely to leave the program during the following month than participants who were not mentored. Because mentoring is voluntary, some of this observed link may reflect participants' motivation. That is, participants who are more motivated may be both more likely to be involved in mentoring and more likely to remain in the program. Nevertheless, the results are encouraging, because the longer participants remain engaged in a program, the more likely they are to benefit.

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[1] While Ready4Work's outcomes are very positive when compared with the BJS data, there are limits to the conclusions that can be drawn from such comparisons. The question of participants' motivation is certainly germane to any discussion of recidivism. Furthermore, our study was not designed to determine if Ready4Work was the cause of any positive participant outcome. More research, such as a random-assignment evaluation, would be needed to draw definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of the intervention.
[2] Site-reported data included basic information on each participant, a monthly record of all the services they received through the site and a monthly record of their employment status. A questionnaire participants filled out when they joined the program provided detailed information on their education and work history, criminal background, religious beliefs and practices and family support.

Participants who received mentoring were also twice as likely to obtain a job than those who did not take advantage of mentoring. Meeting with a mentor increased a participant's odds of getting a job the next month by 73 percent over ex-offenders not taking advantage of the program. Participants who met with a mentor were 56 percent more likely to remain employed for three months than those who did not.[3]

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[3] As previously mentioned, these findings must be interpreted cautiously since mentoring and employment are both related to motivation and possibly other factors as well. The design of the study limited our ability to draw solid cause-and-effect conclusions about mentoring and other program components. Because the Ready4Work model was so new, we oriented our research toward implementation issues. There was no follow-up survey to allow us to explore the precise relationship between mentoring and a wider range of outcomes.

P/PV's Evaluation of Big Brothers Big Sisters' Youth Mentoring Program

In its landmark study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters' (BBBS) community–based mentoring program, Public/Private Ventures answered the question, "can mentoring by a caring adult make a difference in the lives of at-risk youth ages 10 to 16?" The results were positive; the study showed that mentoring benefited youth in several areas, including reductions in drug and alcohol use, reduced violent behavior, increases in school attendance and performance, more positive attitudes towards schoolwork, and higher quality peer and family relationships. Mentors met with their youth almost weekly for a year; the mentor functioned as a friend, not a teacher or a preacher; and the mentors were carefully screened, trained and supervised. (See *Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters*, Tierney and Grossman, 1995, available for free download at www.ppv.org.).

The BBBS Youth Mentoring Program

BBBS' community-based mentoring program aims to provide children (aged 5 to16) from poor single parent homes with long-term, regular contact with a caring adult. Mentors commit to meeting with their child for a minimum of 12 months. The mentors meet approximately once a week for several hours. BBBS is a well-established, high-quality program with more than 500 affiliates across every state, each of which must meet national program standards for level of recruitment, volunteer screening, mentor matching, and continuous supervision and support of matched pairs.

P/PV's Evaluation Methodology

P/PV used the most rigorous of evaluation designs (random assignment) to ensure its findings were defensible. Approximately 1,000 children from eight geographically diverse locations were enrolled in the study. Half of them were assigned, through a lottery, to a group that was matched with a mentor, while the other half of the children joined the wait list for 18 months.

Nearly two-thirds of the study participants were boys, and over half were from a minority group, with 70 percent of that number being African American. Sixty-nine percent of the children were between the ages of 11 and 13 at the start of the program. Fifty-five percent of parents earned a high school equivalency or less. Ninety percent of youth lived with only one parent and many lived in poor households—over 40 percent were receiving either food stamps and/or cash public assistance.

Study participants completed baseline surveys, which gathered basic demographic information as well as the baseline measures for outcome variables in six areas: antisocial activities; academic performance, attitudes and behaviors; relationships with family; relationships with friends; self-concept; and social and cultural enrichment. All study children also filled out follow-up surveys 18 months later. Of the 487 youth assigned to the mentored group, 378 were matched with a Big Brother or Big Sister and met for an average of almost 12 months, meeting about three times per month for about four hours each time.

P/PV's Findings

P/PV found positive impacts of mentoring in all six areas investigated, except social and cultural enrichment. Especially notable impacts within each area include:

Academic:

- Mentored youth skipped 52 percent fewer days of school and 37 percent fewer classes than the unmentored comparison youth.
- Female mentored youth, particularly minority females, felt more competent in school.

Family:

- Mentored youth reported better relationships with parents than comparison group youth, due primarily to higher levels of trust in the parent.

Prevention:

- Mentored youth were 46 percent less likely than nonmentored youth to initiate drug use during the study period. The results were even stronger for minority youth—they were 70 percent less likely to start using drugs.

- Mentored youth were almost one third less likely to report hitting someone in the past 12 months.

Youth Development:

- Mentored youth, particularly minority boys, reported improvements in their relationships with their peers and feeling more emotionally supported by their peers.

The National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth[4]

Building on previous research on mentoring, which provided evidence that mentoring can prevent the initiation of delinquent behaviors (Tierney and Grossman 1995), Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) hypothesized that mentoring high-risk young people might help reduce such behaviors among those already engaged in them. In 1997 P/PV launched the National Faith-Based Initiative; a 12-site demonstration testing the effectiveness of collaborations by local faith-based institutions with juvenile justice and law enforcement organizations. These collaborations sought to provide communities' most vulnerable youth with productive alternatives to crime and violence.

At the time that the National Faith-Based Initiative for High-Risk Youth (NFBI) began in 1998, little evidence existed about the effectiveness of mentoring programs for high-risk young people. Two out of three significant studies evaluating the effect of mentoring on recidivism found mixed results, while a third found mentoring to be harmful (McCord 1992; O'Donnell et al. 1979; Davidson et al. 1987). None of these studies, however, included mentoring programs operated by faith-based organizations. A recent review that assesses evaluations completed since the NFBI began comes to the same conclusion: some programs have achieved modest positive results while others appear to have some harmful effects (Blechman and Bopp 2005). Therefore, the question remains: can mentoring deter high-risk youth from risky behaviors?

Three elements formed the core of the NFBI program:

1. A focus on high-risk youth: P/PV required sites to target youth already involved in delinquent activities, or considered by community members to be headed for trouble.

2. Partnerships: With the successful community and justice partnerships of the Boston Ten Point Coalition in mind, P/PV required sites to collaborate with other faith-based organizations, juvenile justice agencies and social service providers.

3. Key services: In addition to whatever services the sites offered when they entered the demonstration, P/PV required them to develop new services to meet the young people's needs around skill development (education and employment related) and positive adult relationships (mentoring) if they did not already have such services.

The demonstration concluded in late 2004, having served 1,786 youth. We found that the sites generally succeeded in recruiting high-risk youth. They also leveraged their credibility as community leaders to establish partnerships with an array of juvenile justice agencies, social service providers and other faith-based organizations. However, many sites encountered serious challenges in implementing key services. Inexperience in offering structured programming, inadequate staff resources and competing demands on those resources were the primary reasons for the inconsistent and often weak

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[4] From Bauldry, Sean 2006. ***Positive Support: Mentoring and Depression Among High-Risk Youth.*** Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures. Available for free download at www.ppv.org.

implementation. Because of this, we did not recommend to funders and policymakers that they should move forward with a more rigorous random assignment evaluation. We concluded that future work with small to medium-sized faith-based organizations should be guided not simply by broad principles but rather by concrete implementation requirements buttressed with substantial training and technical assistance.

We continued, however, to look at the NFBI's mentoring component. Our third report on the initiative focused on mentoring programs (Bauldry and Hartmann 2004). In that report we documented the creative ways in which the NFBI sites adapted the best practices from community-based mentoring programs to address the unique challenges of working with high-risk youth and faith-based mentors. We found that the sites struggled with mentor recruitment and estimated that they managed to recruit only a third of the volunteers needed to provide a mentor for each young person in their programs at the time. These faith-based mentors tended to be well-educated and resided outside the local community, offering their mentees links to opportunities that may have been unavailable within their own neighborhoods.

We also felt it would be valuable to document participating youth's outcomes in order to determine the more or less successful components of the NFBI, and provide information to the field that might help funders and program operators make better choices about what and how to implement. There are two limitations of the study design to keep in mind when assessing our findings. First, since we did not conduct a random assignment or comparison group study, we cannot attribute the changes the youth experienced to their participation in the programs. Second, due to the timing of the demonstration and the enrollment processes at the sites, we had an average of about six months between baseline and follow-up.

We found no differences in outcomes when we looked at education and employment services. However, our analysis of the youth matched with mentors for at least six months produced interesting results. Mentoring among the NFBI youth acted as a barrier against depression, which in turn had an effect on how the youth handled social conflicts, substance use and recidivism.

Department of Justice

STATEMENT

OF

TESTIMONY OF
PATRICK L. MEEHAN,
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE

CONCERNING

YOUTH VIOLENCE AND MENTORING PROGRAMS

PRESENTED ON

FEBRUARY 19, 2007

AT

CONSTITUTION CENTER
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Testimony of
Patrick L. Meehan,
United States Attorney
For the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Before the
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate

Concerning
Youth Violence and Mentoring Programs

Constitution Center
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

February 19, 2007

Good morning:

Combating violence in neighborhoods is a top priority of U. S. Attorneys across the nation. Through the Department of Justice's signature program, Project Safe Neighborhoods, my colleagues and I are coordinating the efforts of federal, state, and local law enforcement and community groups against gun crime. This includes maximizing the use of federal laws like the armed career criminal statute, and the Hobbs Act, to remove the most dangerous criminals from the neighborhoods and to combat gangs and drug trafficking organizations.

Moreover, I previously served for six years as a county District Attorney. There, our juvenile justice system helped deter crime through prevention efforts aimed at our most serious threat - at-risk juveniles with a propensity toward violence.

Accordingly, I am pleased to have this opportunity to share with the Committee some of my thoughts about programs that are having an impact on violence in our region, particularly with dangerous juveniles.

I will focus my remarks on three outstanding programs which include both a mentoring component, and a strong law enforcement message to at-risk youth who find themselves at a crossroads in their lives. These programs are: The Youth Violence Reduction Project, Don't Fall Down in the Hood, and the Glen Mills Community Management Services Program.

A common characteristic of these three programs is a focus on comprehensive intervention with young persons most likely to seriously harm others or to be harmed themselves. Each seeks to deter individuals from choices that increase their exposure to harm while promoting accountability, responsibility, and personal development. Each attempts to show dangerous juveniles that there is an alternative to violence and a future beyond crime.

A. The Youth Violence Reduction Program

The Youth Violence Reduction Program (YVRP) continues to be a great success story. This program provides intensive support with graduated sanctions for noncompliance for youths aged 24 and younger, who are at the greatest risk of killing or being killed. YVRP began in June of 1999 in the 24th, Philadelphia Police District. It has been repeatedly expanded, and now includes 100 active youth partners in five police districts including the 12th, 19th, 22nd, 24th, and 25th. The agencies partnering in this effort include the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, the Philadelphia Police Department, Philadelphia Adult and Juvenile Probation, Philadelphia Anti-Drug Anti-Violence Network, Safe and Sound, Public/Private Ventures, The Department of Human Services, The School District, The Department of Behavioral Health, and others.

The results of this effort have been particularly promising, especially in light of the overall increase in violence in the city. According to the District Attorney's Office, when a comparison was made of the homicides in three of the police districts for the years just prior to YVRP's initiation in the districts, the results have been significant: for youths 24 and under, homicides decreased
46% in the 24th district, 48% in the 25th district, and 9% in the 12th district.

While the USAO has not been directly involved in the operations of the YVRP, as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, from 2003 to 2006, the USAO was able to facilitate the funding of $700,000 for YVRP.

B. Don't Fall Down in the Hood

A second program with which we have closely worked is "Don't Fall Down in the Hood," a program offered by the Institute for the Advancement of African-AmerOne comment suggested eliminating this sentence. We would prefican Youth. This is a city-funded program, that works with juvenile offenders, ages 14-18, after their first arrest for narcotics, assault,

firearms, and other offenses. The ultimate goal of this program is reducing the criminal behavior of the offenders while showing them how to take advantage of meaningful opportunities in the community. The teens are referred to the program mostly from the Philadelphia Family Court and the Youth Study Center. The program lasts up to four months and includes rigorous training and education in computer literacy, conflict resolution, basic business skills, money management, decision making, time management, and goal setting. As part of the program, the students receive presentations from professionals to educate them about life and death decisions and alternatives to violence.

Assistants in my office regularly speak to the kids about the dangers and consequences of gun violence. In fact, my office produced a 22-minute documentary, which includes segments of classes with Don't Fall Down in the Hood students, and focuses on the dangers of firearms violence and the potential penalties that result when a case is brought into federal court. This video has been shown not only in Philadelphia but in cities across the country.

According to Archie Leacock, the Executive Director of the program, to date, Don't Fall Down in the Hood has included more than 860 youths. A study of the program by the Department of Human Services, Court and Community Division revealed that only three percent of the participants committed criminal offenses while in the program and only seven percent committed an offense following their completion of the program. Mr. Leacock, who has done magnificent work stretching his minimal resources, has commented to us that Don't Fall Down in the Hood, "saves the lives of the kids and makes their neighborhoods safer. Without it, these kids may very well be dead or in jail."

C. Glen Mills Community Service Management Program

The third program of note is The Community Management Services Program of The Glen Mills Schools. It includes a strong component of aftercare. This provides reintegration services for court-adjudicated juveniles who are returning to a community after completing a residential commitment. Like adult prisoners after incarceration, they face unique pressures and tough choices upon a return to their neighborhoods. Juveniles participate in creating a transition plan and are supervised face to face upon their reintegration. They receive assistance in school re-entry, employment search, individual counseling, and family meetings and 24-hour crisis intervention is available if called for. The goal is to reduce overall recidivism by providing additional structure to sustain the growth and change made in placement. While pre-adjudication and truancy services are also part of the "Community Management Model," the value in building upon the progress made during juvenile commitment cannot be underestimated.

D. Other Promising Programs

Please allow me to conclude my testimony by observing that intensive intervention is a critical component of anti-violence efforts, but other longer term interventions also play a vital role in keeping our communities safe. For example, anti-truancy programs that identify chronically truant juveniles and reestablish them in age appropriate remedial education are a proven deterrent to crime. The grim reality facing many young people today is that the difference between the road taken and not taken is often the difference between life and death.

Another target population for intervention is children with a parent or parents in prison. Statistics have shown that the children of adults who are incarcerated are among the most likely to one day be incarcerated themselves. Two programs which effectively intervene with those children are the Amachi Program, which is championed by former Philadelphia Mayor Wilson Goode, and the U.S. Dream Academy, Inc., which is led by Reverend Wintley Phipps.

Finally, unmarried teen-aged mothers and their children are often at the greatest risk of becoming entrenched in a lifestyle of poverty and family dysfunction that is often a precursor to future trouble. A tremendous program is the Nurse Family Partnership; a home visitation program that provides support, education and counseling on health, parenting and self sufficiency to low-income first time mothers. The program provides children with a better start in life by helping mothers develop good parenting skills. Statistics have shown that women who participate in this program are significantly less likely to abuse or neglect their children, and are likely to finish their education and move off welfare and into gainful employment.

In conclusion, law enforcement is one critical piece of a solution to the problems of crime and violence, particularly among juveniles. But a comprehensive approach which includes interventions like the kinds I have mentioned today increase the capacity, we have to keep our neighborhoods safe and to steer young people away from bad choices before it is too late.

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February 19 Senate Judiciary Committee
Hearing on "Mentoring and Community-Based Solutions to Delinquency and Youth Violence"

Good morning Senators. My name is Mike Pennington and I am the Director of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to talk about youth violence, which is a major concern for all of us. Although there are many factors that contribute to youth violence, I would like to focus my remarks today on prevention programs that are grounded in research, and on quality aftercare and re-entry services for youth leaving delinquency placements.

The demand for prevention programs that have been proven effective in preventing adolescent problem behavior has never been greater.

Historically, many of the resources committed to the prevention of youth violence, delinquency and other problem behaviors have been invested in untested programs with little or no evaluation.

Without quality aftercare and prevention, you will see more youth violence.

Today, we are blessed with a substantial body of research that tell us what contributes to these behaviors and what can help us prevent them. The goal of our prevention funding is to support the implementation of programs that prevention scientists have evaluated and deemed effective at reducing problem behaviors.

Some of these programs that we have funded, known as Blueprints for Violence Prevention model programs, include:

- **Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentoring programs**
- **Multisystemic Therapy**
- **Functional Family Therapy**
- **Bullying Prevention**
- **And Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS).**

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I believe it is critical that we continue to invest in proven, effective programs. For example, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, known as PATHS, is a program that promotes emotional and social competencies and reducing aggression and behavioral problems in elementary school-aged children while enhancing the educational process in the classroom.

Evaluations have demonstrated significant improvements in the following areas: increased ability to tolerate frustration, improved self-control and use of more effective conflict resolution strategies.

One of the requirements for funding is that applications must be submitted on behalf of a local collaborative board. The collaborative board must complete a risk and resource assessment that includes identified, prioritized risk factors for adolescent problem behaviors. Based on that assessment, local communities can select evidence-based prevention programs that would be most effective for their youth.

This will help to ensure that broad-based prevention planning has been completed and that prioritized risk factors will guide the community's selection and implementation of a prevention strategy developed within a collaborative environment.

Even though these are model prevention programs, they will not result in significant improvements for children and families if they are not implemented in the way that each was designed and tested.

It is critical that we provide strong and proactive technical assistance to local communities that receive our funding to ensure quality implementation. Technical assistance is also provided to develop an outcome assessment plan as well as a plan for sustaining the program long-term.

It is important that we continue to work collaboratively across state agencies so that our prevention efforts are well coordinated to best utilize and maximize our collective resources.

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There are proven initiatives to build on such as Communities That Care (CTC), which is now a critical tool as part of SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework.

CTC is a violence and delinquency prevention strategy that provides communities with a process to mobilize the community, identify risk and preventive factors, and develop a comprehensive prevention plan.

Another major initiative in Pennsylvania is developing a comprehensive aftercare system by the year 2010. Stakeholders in the juvenile justice system as well as others in related systems are working together to develop a model aftercare system for youth leaving delinquency placements.

A comprehensive approach to aftercare will ensure that youth receive timely and appropriate social support in such areas as:

- **Enrolling immediately in school or have a job waiting for them.**
- **Continuing the follow-up services that are required for those who received physical or behavioral health treatment while in care.**
- **Having strong adult support from family or other caring adults.**
- **Having sufficient attention paid to developing their competencies while in care so that they can successfully return to their home and community.**
- **And ensuring that each youth offender understands and acknowledges the wrongfulness of their actions, the impact of the crime on the crime victim and the community. Each child must recognize his or her responsibility for causing harm.**

It is important that returning juveniles who need to continue their treatment in the community have access to a continuum of services that have been demonstrated to be effective. Effective aftercare is crucial if youths are to benefit from residential treatment programs and successfully return home; and that is also a key element in promoting public safety.

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I think we can all agree that it would be ideal if we could prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system in the first place. In meeting its public safety responsibilities, Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system has turned away from a purely reactive approach to delinquency, in favor of one that focuses on creating conditions and programs that promote positive development for all young people and prevent delinquency from occurring in the first place.

As I mentioned earlier in my remarks, the community-based, risk-focused prevention approach to reducing delinquency, recognizes the limits of time and resources available to the court. It pulls together schools, community organizations, businesses, and public agencies to play a part in the work of preventing and reducing delinquency.

Successful delinquency prevention programs attempt to increase protective factors- those positive traits, beliefs, relationships, and connections in juveniles' lives that help them overcome adversity. As parents we want these for our own children; we should want no less for the children at risk of entering the juvenile justice system.

Without quality aftercare and prevention, you will see more youth violence.

There are no easy solutions to addressing youth violence, but we do know that healthy communities, strong families and a quality education are critical to the success of our youth.

I am submitting as supplemental written testimony our Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Plan and a prevention initiative outline for more detail on our programs for your review.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today and I look forward to our working together in providing youth with the best opportunities to be successful.

Testimony of Pedro A. Ramos
Hearing before the Senate Judiciary and Appropriations Committees
February 19, 2007

On behalf of Mayor John F. Street, thank you Chairman Specter and members of the Judiciary and Appropriations Committees for giving me the opportunity to testify here today. Mr. Chairman, your commitment to addressing the issue of youth violence is demonstrated not only by your words but by your actions, such as holding hearings like this one today and providing the leadership to obtain funding to support the City's violence initiatives, like the Youth Violence Reduction Partnership (YVRP), which I will discuss later.

We all continue to struggle with the challenge of addressing the growing problem of violence and the devastating effects it has on our community, especially on our youngest citizens. Violence is shattering the dreams and futures of too many children and youth in our city.

A comprehensive and community-wide strategy is needed to address this growing violence. The Street administration has invested heavily in violence prevention programs, and there is no more important priority for this administration than the safety and stability of our children and youth. A

significant component of our comprehensive violence reduction strategy is mentoring. My testimony will focus on how current violence reduction efforts, specifically YVRP – which has been tied to significant decreases in youth homicide rates – and the Adolescent Violence Reduction Partnership (AVRP), utilize mentoring as a key component of their approaches.

Although we are seeing positive trends in the reduction of many major crimes[1], there has been recent growth in violence among youth ages 18-24:

- The number of arrests for violent crimes increased by one percent between 2004 and 2005;
- The number of arrests for homicide increased by four percent between 2004 and 2005;
- The number of arrests for rape increased by three percent between 2004 and 2005.

One of the city's most notable research-based violence reduction strategies is YVRP, which is active in five of the city's 24 police districts. This proven model targets youth who are most likely to kill or be killed and provides them with intensive supervision, mentoring, and support services.

[1] The number of violent crime arrests has decreased by 12% between 2001 and 2005: rape arrests have decreased by 24%; arrests for robberies have decreased by 4%; aggravated assault arrests have decreased by 18%.

YVRP is a partnership among the Philadelphia Police Department, Adult and Juvenile Probation, the District Attorney's Office, the Managing Director's Office, the departments of Human Services, Recreation and Behavioral Health, as well as other partner agencies, both public and private.

The young people enrolled in the program are known as "youth partners," and the paraprofessionals who deliver many of the services, including mentoring, are known as "streetworkers." The essential elements of YVRP, each of which I will describe in detail, are identification, surveillance, graduated sanctions, positive supports – including mentoring, and gun suppression.

- Identification: YVRP utilizes research-based indicators to identify youth ages 16 to 24 who are most at risk to kill or be killed;
- Surveillance: Streetworkers, police, and probation officers provide intensive supervision (usually daily) to monitor the youth partners wherever they are —in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods;
- Graduated sanctions: When a participating youth violates his or her probation, YVRP swiftly imposes sanctions. Research has

demonstrated that the prompt deployment of sanctions can be a key element in deterring further criminal behavior;

- Positive supports and mentoring: Sanctions alone are not enough to deter youth from criminal behavior. YVRP streetworkers help youth partners access a range of positive supports, including educational opportunities, literacy, job placement, and drug treatment. A key component of positive supports is the mentoring relationship between streetworker and youth partner. Streetworkers are from the same neighborhoods and have similar backgrounds as the youth partners. This shared context and experience creates a strong bond between the streetworker and youth partner, increasing the effectiveness of the streetworker;
- Gun suppression: YVRP is working with local, state, and federal authorities to deter both access to, and use of, firearms by young people.

YVRP was first introduced in the 24th police district in 1999 and has since expanded to a total of five police districts. Since its inception, approximately 2,100 youth have been part of YVRP. Given the target

population, it is clear YVRP has saved many lives: Through December 2006, only 1.3 percent of YVRP youth partners have either died or been accused of murder.[2] While a single death is too many, the data clearly demonstrate the success we have had mentoring 98.7 percent of our youth partners.

YVRP has been subjected to rigorous third-party validation, and the results are promising: According to research conducted by Public/Private Ventures, in the three police districts where YVRP has been implemented long enough for evaluation, the homicide rate has decreased by between 32 and 62 percent. Although two districts have recently experienced an increase in these rates, it is less than the overall increase in the City's homicide rate.

Comment [PAR1]: Does this sentence relate to data in third-party validation study or data beyond that period? Data from KV's draft (not clear of end dates or source:
- Youth homicides in the 24th police district have declined by an average of 46% since 1999;
- Youth homicides in the 25th police district have declined by an average of 48% since 2000;
- Youth homicides in the 12th police district have declined by an average of 9% since 2003;
- In the three police districts where YVRP has been operating for more than one year, there has been a 36.6% reduction in the number of homicides of youth ages 14-24.

YVRP is currently funded through a combination of state grants, a federal earmark, City government dollars, and in-kind contributions by government agencies. In FY 2007, the total cost of YVRP operations will be $7.15 million, over 80 percent of which are grant funds. Assuming that all in-kind contributions and current grants would remain the same, expanding

[2] Sixteen youth have died: thirteen homicide victims, two suicides, and one automobile accident. Twelve have been charged with murder: five have been found guilty, one was found not guilty, one had his murder case withdrawn, and five have open cases.

YVRP to another nine police districts would cost an additional $6.9 million annually.

Given the success of YVRP with 16-24 year olds and the reports of growing violence among younger youth, it is logical that this initiative be driven down to younger youth. *Lifetimes at Risk: Young Offenders Between 10-12 Years of Age The Philadelphia Story*, a briefing paper published by Philadelphia Safe and Sound, documents that we know how to identify youth at younger ages who are likely to kill or be killed. And we are doing just that through the Adolescent Violence Reduction Partnership (AVRP). AVRP is designed to intervene with 10- to 15-year-old youth at the first sign of serious risk behaviors, connect them with streetworkers, and provide support services to help them re-direct their lives before becoming victims or perpetrators.

For both YVRP and AVRP, the streetworker naturally takes on a role of mentor to the youth, encouraging him or her to make positive choices for the future. Natural mentors have been demonstrated to be a positive influence for at-risk youth, a finding that is validated by the success of the YVRP program.

In conclusion, I want to again thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today and, more importantly, for your commitment to addressing the violence crisis we battle everyday. I will answer any questions you may have.

Testimony of

Dr. Gerald L. Zahorchak

Secretary of Education

Senate Judiciary Hearing

National Constitution Center

February 19, 2007

Thank you, Senator Specter, for holding this roundtable discussion on the important issue of school safety. You have been a leader in this area at both the national and local levels, and I am grateful that you have invited me here and given me the opportunity to talk with you today. At the outset, I would like to tell you that although our schools are safe and have been made safer in recent years, there is still work to be done to further improve school safety. I would like to address specifically the important issue of student gang involvement.

Use of Data to Understand Student Behavior Problems As Well As Academic Achievement

In Pennsylvania, we have learned to use student assessment data to identify and address the causes of student academic problems. In the same way, it is critical that we learn to use data to identify and address the root causes of student behavioral problems.

Pennsylvania is now experiencing unparalleled success in raising academic achievement in every grade level and in every content area. Nowhere is that success more impressive than in our lowest performing schools. Pennsylvania schools that had less than half of their student population scoring proficient on the PSSA in 2001 have experienced double digit increases in proficient scores at every grade level and in every demographic group, including race, family income, language ability, and IEP status. In Pennsylvania, we know that our success has resulted from our relentless focus on examining student achievement data and asking serious questions not only about student achievement, but also about the educational practices that are most likely to have a positive impact on the students in a particular classroom, school, district, and community. We follow a plan of continuous improvement in which we increase the level of intervention in a school depending upon the severity of the school's need. This plan provides three levels of support: ***foundation*** support to all school districts, ***targeted*** support for districts that are struggling in particular areas and are on the school improvement or warning list, and ***intensive*** support for those school districts that need corrective action.

Since school safety concerns encompass such a broad spectrum of problems, I would like to take a specific example of a safety issue and show how it could be addressed using Pennsylvania's continuous improvement model. I've chosen the topic of "reducing and eliminating gang activity" as the example because there is significant research addressing the root causes of gang activity that can be addressed by specific interventions, and also because gang activity constitutes a living example of a problem that requires intervention and collaboration across multiple agencies, such as schools, law enforcement, and social services.

Description of Gangs and Risk Factors

Sociologists differ on the specific definition of the term "gang"; however, the word as we know it generally describes a group of as few as five adolescents or young adults who gather, share an identity, use common symbols, and claim control over neighborhood territory. In addition, a gang may sometimes engage in illegal activities. Gang violence is no longer solely an urban problem. Some may be surprised to learn that, while all law enforcement agencies serving populations of at least 250,000 people must confront gangs, 30 percent of police departments in municipalities with as small a population as 2,500 people also have trouble with gangs.[1]

To prevent a specific phenomenon such as gang membership, it is important to understand the root cause of gang membership: Why do kids join gangs? If we do not understand the reason for gang membership, we cannot prevent it. Research has shown two major reasons, or "root causes," why young people join gangs. First, these kids seek a sense of identity and fellowship. A gang provides its members with a degree of belonging the members think they cannot achieve outside of the gang's culture. In essence, the gang functions as an extension of, or substitute for, the family or the community. Second, and perhaps ironically, these kids seek safety. Kids who live in an area that is already overrun with gangs and who are subjected to gang violence often join gangs in an attempt to obtain safety and protection from the violence.

Acknowledging and Responding to Gang Problems

While it is natural for us to ask how we can suppress and intervene in gang activity, focusing on this question may cause us to overlook the best strategy we have: prevention. This is where schools can have their biggest impact. At the Pennsylvania Department of Education, experience has taught us that we can prevent a phenomenon (whether that phenomenon is poor academic performance or school violence) only if we understand and address or eliminate its root cause. We need to review the principles we have used to improve student academic performance and apply those same principles to the arena of student behavioral performance.

1. Levels of Prevention and Intervention

To help students overcome academic problems, we apply three levels of support depending upon the severity of the need. Similar to the foundation, targeted and intensive academic supports that the Pennsylvania Department of Education provides its schools and districts, we must engage in three levels of prevention and intervention to prevent young people from joining gangs in the first place, and to intervene in situations in which young people have already joined gangs:

- Primary Prevention, in which we target all youth and families, with a particular focus on youth up to age 14;
- Targeted Intervention, in which we target youth and families with particular risk factors for gang involvement, with a special emphasis on youth between the ages of 7 and 14; and

[1] The National Youth Gang Survey, 2005.

- Intensive Intervention, in which we target active gang members.

Schools have access to a significant amount of data that can be used to evaluate a student's risk of becoming involved in a gang. This data includes, for example, attendance rates, truancy rates, serious incident rates, behavior, grades, and suspension and expulsion rates. Schools can use this data to assess risk factors for violence and other behavioral problems, on both an individual basis and a school-wide basis, and address these problems early.

2. Prevention Efforts

Given what we know about the risk factors and root causes of gang membership, what are the best prevention efforts we, as educators and as a community, can provide?

First, we can provide youth with more support earlier in their lives. It is critical that we reach kids at a young age, such as 7 and above. We need to give them opportunities to belong to something meaningful other than a gang. We also need to take kids' natural need for excitement and channel that need constructively - toward sports, academics, music, and positive community involvement. We believe mentoring is a valuable and proactive approach for youth development. The Department promotes mentoring partnerships between schools and community organizations such as Big Brothers and Big Sisters, local YMCAs and YWCAs, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, and others.

We thoroughly support the vision you have, Senator Specter, of mentoring as a community effort in which we engage our partners in the business, industry, law enforcement, faith, and other communities. We would also like to include our older youth in this effort, by asking our high school students to mentor younger students, so they can also provide a service for their schools and communities. We look forward to putting this vision into action to help all of our youth reach their fullest potential, while also improving the health and future of our communities. We thank you, Senator Specter, for your leadership on this critical issue.

The Department recognizes the value and importance of caring relationships and adult role models in the lives of our youth. We target support to struggling students by providing tutors through our Educational Assistance program so that, ultimately, all students achieve reading and math proficiency, graduate from high school, and are prepared for success in college and career. Strong models for quality tutoring include those that develop one-on-one supportive relationships between the tutor and student that lead to both academic and life success.

Second, we can help to strengthen families. Research has shown that 84% of gang members surveyed live with only one parent, and 65% of gang members have parents who work during the second or third shift. While these parents are outside the home and working hard to support their families, they may have difficulty monitoring their kids' activities. We can help by encouraging parents to be involved in their kids' lives. We can invite parents to participate in school programs, and when those parents are unable to participate, we can keep parents informed of their kids' school progress and involvement through notes, newsletters, and e-mails.

Finally, we can help to strengthen communities. Gang members who were surveyed said that gangs filled certain gaps in their lives. These young people stated, almost universally, that they had no good-paying job opportunities other than selling drugs and stealing. These kids said they were socially isolated and did not feel accepted in many places. The kids did not think they

had anywhere to go or anything worthwhile to do after school, on weekends, and during the summer, other than become involved in a gang. Schools and communities need to help young people find better ways to fill these gaps, through good job opportunities and school and community activities. A good example is the 21st Century Community Centers program that provides Pennsylvania students academic and youth development activities to keep them active in music and athletics as well as enhance their resiliency through drug and violence prevention programs. Further, the centers extend beyond the students to the family and community by offering literacy and educational services.

General School Safety Efforts

In Pennsylvania, we have undertaken important new steps to increase our school violence prevention efforts. We work closely with our partners at the Pennsylvania State Police, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to support schools in creating comprehensive safety plans and reviewing their internal programs for prevention. As you know, in Pennsylvania schools are required not only to have a safety plan, but to submit to the Department every year a summary of their school safety data. We collect and publish on our website school-by-school reports on violent incidents. We also provide technical assistance such as the Center for Safe Schools, our annual safe schools conference, and small, limited safety grants. In addition, in collaboration with our partners at the Juvenile Court Justices Commission and the Department of Public Welfare, the Department has introduced a stronger, more aligned approach and response to truancy, which includes a new policy statement, effective practices, resources, and strategies that can be used by all stakeholders, especially students and their families.

Our goal in Pennsylvania is to see all children succeed and be ready for post-secondary education or career, regardless of their background and circumstances. In strong partnership with the Department of Public Welfare and the Governor's Children's Commission, we are working to build resiliency in our students, classrooms, and schools using a model that promotes the following six key factors: high expectations; meaningful student engagement; connectedness and bonding; clear, consistent boundaries; life skills; and caring and support.

Although we continue to ask schools to improve their practices and implement an aligned, systemic approach to preventing school violence, we also acknowledge the importance of sufficient resources to support this important work. Last year, Pennsylvania suffered a 20% decrease in Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities grant funds, which has had a significant negative effect on schools. We are especially concerned that the President has asked Congress for a continued reduction and elimination of these funds, because they are essential in supporting local safety efforts. The importance of these funds cannot be overstated in helping our schools to be safe and secure so that kids are able to learn.

Pennsylvania's schools and communities must examine the causes of student behavioral problems in the same way that we examine the causes of student academic problems. By doing so, we can identify and address the roots of such problems early -- hopefully early enough to prevent these behavior problems from occurring in the first place. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today.

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