

Name of the Task Force: Mayor's Task Force on Youth Violence

Question the Task Force is Addressing: How Can We Understand and Lessen the Causes of Youth Violence

Implementation Period: First 100 days

Policy Proposal Title: The Mayor's City Peace Council

Vision: To create a safe and peaceful environment where all youth in the City of Oakland will be able to participate fully in our community, free from the fear of youth and gang related homicides.

Rationale: The causes of youth violence can be best understood by using the public health model of risk assessment. Communities can assess the risk factors found in their communities and determine how they may be causing and contributing to youth violence. The risk factors that contribute to youth violence include – poverty and economic disparity, community deterioration, discrimination and oppression, illiteracy and school failure, availability of alcohol and drugs, availability of firearms, youth gang involvement, child victimization and maltreatment, cognitive and neurological deficits and negative family dynamics.

Protective or resilience factors can be assessed and enhanced to counteract the negative effects of risk factors and lessen the cause of youth violence. The City of Oakland has articulated this view in the *2003 Violence Prevention Plan*, the *Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act of 2004 (Measure Y)*, and the *Three-Year Delinquency Prevention Plan*. The County of Alameda has also adopted this model in the *2005 Violence Prevention: Alameda County's Blueprint* and *Violence in Oakland: A Public Health Crisis*. These are comprehensive plans that call for enacting best practice prevention strategies to reduce the risk factors and enhance the protective factors before the onset of violence.

The Task Force on Youth Violence believes that these risk factors, identified in the City and County plans, continue to threaten the youth of Oakland. The Task Force believes that we can lessen the causes of youth violence in Oakland by supporting programs that are proven to be effective in reducing risk factors and by supporting effective programs that are proven to enhance protective factors. Firearms are used in the vast majority of youth homicides in Oakland and Oakland Police estimate that most homicides in Oakland are gang related. The two risk factors addressed by this recommendation are the availability of firearms and gang involvement. Therefore the Public Safety Task Force on Youth Violence recommends the following goal:

Goal: The Mayor's Office will make peacekeeping and gang disarmament a priority by establishing a City Peace Council that will work collaboratively to reduce youth homicides by 75% over the next four years.

Objective #1: The mayor will form a City Peace Council.

Strategies for Objective #1: The City Peace Council will be composed of men and women who have shown effectiveness in working with violence prevention, gang truce processes and restorative justice. The Peace Council will strive to involve established community organizations and government agencies who have been working to halt violence and loss of life caused by firearms.

Community Support for Objective #1: Possible member organizations include: Family and Friends of Murder Victims. Youth Alive's program "Teens on Target", the Ella Baker Center's "Silence the Violence", and Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth. Additional resources could be obtained through collaboration with the Urban Institute, the National Center of Crime and Delinquency, and gang peace protocols modeled in Los Angeles, Boston and Newark.

Strategies for Objective #2: The City Peace Council will follow the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue guidelines and actively pursue a city-wide gang disarmament program to remove firearms from gang members and associates.

Community Support for Objective #2: The Peace Council will work to ensure that the Oakland City Council will support the ongoing collaboration of the State Attorney General and Oakland Police Department's efforts to curtail the secondary market of illegal guns and to trace those and stolen guns used in crime. The Mayor should also support the necessary budget increase to allow the Police Department to have the sufficient number of officers in the Weapons Unit to enforce California's Armed and Prohibited law and all other Oakland gun ordinances. Additional resources could be obtained through collaboration with Mayors Against Illegal Guns, and the Legal Community Against Violence.

Strategies for Objective #3: The Peace Council should lead the effort to place violence prevention curriculum in every Oakland elementary and middle school, modeling the success of the Safe Passages Middle School strategy. Additionally the Peace Council should launch a city-wide effort aimed at high school age gang involved youth to reduce youth firearm possession through a campaign to promote non-violent dispute resolution and peacekeeping that challenges violent and retaliatory youth gang culture, modeled on the success of the Youth Alive program "Teens on Target", the Ella Baker Center's "Silence the Violence".

Community Support for Objective #3: Effective prevention programs are currently in use in Oakland and funded by Measure Y. These include Safe Passages, Our Kids, The Mentoring Center, Youth Uprising and many more important programs that deserve continued support and funding.

Budget: \$75,000 for administrative support through the Department of Human Services.

Names of Task Force Members: Aswan Boudreaux, Darleen Brooks, Terry Butler, Lee Copenhagen, Sidney Coulter, Nina Horne, N. Sharifah Ihsan-Wilson, Langston Hill, Kathleen H. Jackson, Donald Lacy, Nicole Lee, Asha Levert, Ain Mulindwa, James McWilliams, Dorlista Reed, John Robinson, Nika St.Claire, Sandra Taylor, Chineyere Tutashinda, Kweli Tutashinda, and Beatrice X.

Approval: Each recommendation requires approval by at least 2/3rds of the Task Force members. Did 2/3 of your task force members approve this recommendation? Yes X No

Minority Report: A minority report can be submitted for any recommendation if supported by 20% of the Task Force members. Is there a minority report for this recommendation? Yes No X