

THE IMPACT OF INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS ON
GUN VIOLENCE IN THE FUTURE

Article

by

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Introduction

As a country, we have enjoyed a prosperous and auspicious eight years since 1993 in terms of the economy, technological advances, crime reduction, and world peace. Budget surpluses exist at federal and state levels. The Internet has flourished into a key worldwide communications and commercial trade tool, and there have been only small-scale military confrontations throughout the world. For the most part, crime rates have fallen at a steady pace since 1993. Even as we look to this prosperity and apparent good fortune, we continue to be plagued by the evil of gun violence that destroys lives and rocks the confidence and quality of life for our citizens. The drop in crime rates that politicians and law enforcement executives point to means little to the mother who mourns the loss of her son to a drive-by shooting. This article will look to the future to address the issue of reducing gun violence. It will explore how innovative partnerships can impact the reduction of gun violence in the future. Gun violence can take many forms including criminal violence, suicide, accidental death, and justifiable homicide. This article looks at impacting gun violence in terms of criminal conduct and the innovative partnerships that can join forces to achieve that result.

Historical Perspective

Unlike some law enforcement concerns that have escalated over the years from low-priority-response to high-priority-response, such as domestic violence, child abuse, and missing persons cases, crimes involving firearms have

always been a priority for law enforcement. Whether a shooting results from a robbery, gang-related confrontation, or a bar fight, law enforcement generally commits whatever resources are necessary to fully investigate the crime until an arrest is made or all investigative leads are exhausted. These responses have been primarily reactive with little attention to proactive and preventative approaches.

Criminal gun violence can be broken down statistically in various ways. Guns used in specific crimes like homicide, assault, and robbery, as well as guns used in broader crime categories like domestic violence, school violence, and mass shootings, can be categorized and considered. The age, gender, and race of the victim and offender can be broken down and analyzed from numerous perspectives. The actual firearms help identify the shooter through their sales history, and markings left on the bullets and casings.

Homicides are the most frequently studied and cited crimes. Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies have traditionally listed homicide first in any statistical information published. Although homicides represent a small percentage of all crimes committed, they are looked at as a safety barometer for those who live and work in a particular community. This is not surprising since few crimes shock the conscience of the public and rock their sense of security, like homicides.

The most common weapons used to commit homicides are firearms. The United States Department of Justice Uniform Crime Reports for 1999 shows that of the 12,658 homicides reported, 8,259, or 65.2 percent, were committed by

some type of firearm. Of those 8,259 firearm-related homicides, 6,498, or 78.7 percent, were committed by handguns.¹ Gun violence is not a new phenomena. In 1969, members of the Violence Commission described a “domestic arms buildup” that occurred during the 1960s. At that time, there was an estimated 90 million firearms in the United States, and half of the nation’s 60 million households possessed at least one gun. During the past 30 years, Americans have continued to amass guns. Currently, there are over 200 million firearms in the hands of this country’s citizens.² The number of guns has increased at a faster rate than the population has grown. Recent polling data suggests that approximately 38 percent of the nation’s 103 million households contain at least one gun.³ While the percentage of gun-owning households has declined, the number of guns within those households has increased.

The types of guns Americans buy have also changed. During the 1960s, handguns comprised an increasing percentage of gun sales, a trend that continues today.⁴ In contrast to rifles, which are primarily used for sport, handguns are generally purchased for protection. The increase of handguns in circulation certainly has a bearing on gun violence since handguns are the weapons of choice in the majority of homicides. In the 1970s, handgun design began to change to small easily concealed models known as Saturday Night Specials. The manufacture of these Saturday Night Specials significantly increased in the United States when their import was banned in 1968. These palm-sized, low quality, inexpensive handguns are frequently among the top guns recovered by police and confiscated from youth.⁵ More recently, the higher

ammunition capacity, high quality, high caliber, and more expensive semi-automatic pistols marketed for personal protection have become more popular. In 1987, production of semi-automatic pistols outnumbered that of revolvers, reflecting a shift toward the increasingly popular pistols that would continue through the 1990s.⁶ Many of these pistols hold a larger number of bullets than revolvers, allowing a longer series of uninterrupted firing. The gun industry is now more focused on manufacturing guns for protection than for sporting. Over the past thirty years, handguns have become more efficient killing machines, as the semi-automatic pistols have become more compact, higher caliber, and hold more bullets.

The fascination Americans have for firearms is more than an interest by a certain subculture. Guns seem to be central to the identity of Americans who perceive them as reflective of their roots. The image of cowboys settling the West, Hollywood gangsters running the streets of the inner city, and heroic cops getting their man encourages the sale, possession, and use of firearms. The continued glamorization of firearms in games, videos, and the media perpetuates the almost romantic image of firearms as an appropriate way to settle disputes and prove your mettle. Unfortunately, youth most frequently fall prey to this glamorization. Those who in any way challenge the sale or possession of firearms will be accused by many as un-American, attempting to deprive others of their constitutional right to own and bear firearms. In the balance are thousands of Americans who die annually as a result of firearms.

While most people are frightened and concerned over high-profile shootings, like the string of school shootings in recent years, particularly the Columbine, Santana, and most recently the Granite Hills High School shooting, most Americans are unaware of the overall carnage firearms have caused in American history. More Americans were killed by guns during the eighteen-year period between 1979 and 1997 than in all wars since 1775, including the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, Mexican War, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War, and conflicts in Lebanon, Grenada, and Panama.⁷

The extent of firearm violence in this country is almost incomprehensible. What makes the tale of gun violence even grimmer is a look at the ages of the victims and perpetrators of this violence. In 1999, males between the ages of 17 to 24 years were the victims in 2,999 of 9,558 cases, or 31 percent of all homicides committed with guns. Victims between the ages of 25 and 34 years represent 26 percent of such homicides. Forty-one percent of individuals arrested for these homicides were between the ages of 17 and 24 years, while 21 percent of those arrested were between the ages of 25 and 34 years.⁸

Gun violence has a profound impact on children and adolescents in this country, killing an average of ten young people, ages nineteen years and under, each day.⁹ According to the Center for Disease Control, the overall firearms-related death rate among United States children under the age of 15 years, is nearly 12 times higher than that among children in 25 other industrialized nations combined.¹⁰ In California, more youth ages thirteen to nineteen years died from

firearms violence in 1998, than from motor vehicle injuries, disease, and all other causes.¹¹

The rash of school shootings has particularly upset Americans in recent years, most notably the Columbine High School shooting which occurred on April 20, 1999. Two students went on a shooting and bombing rampage, killing a teacher and twelve other students before committing suicide. Tragically, other gun violence incidents involving children have occurred since Columbine.

Incidents that received the most media attention include:

- The August 1999 shooting by a white supremacist at the North Valley Jewish Community Center in Granada Hills, California, that left three children, a teenage counselor, and a receptionist injured, and a Filipino-American postal worker dead.
- The February 2000 fatal shooting of a first-grader by her six-year-old classmate in Flint, Michigan.
- The April 2000 gun battle at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., which left seven children wounded.
- The May 2000 fatal shooting by a thirteen-year-old boy of his English Teacher on the last day of school in Lake Worth, Florida.¹²
- The March 5, 2001 fatal shooting of two students and the wounding of thirteen others at Santana High School in Santee, California.¹³
- The March 22, 2001 shooting of three students and two teachers at Granite Hills High School in El Cajon, California.¹⁴

- The March 30, 2001 fatal shooting of a seventeen-year-old student by a seventeen-year-old former student at Lew Wallace High School, in Gary, Indiana.¹⁵

In addition to the obvious personal and emotional tragedies involved in the wake of continued gun violence is the astounding economic toll on our country. A 1999 study in the Journal of American Medical Association estimates medical costs of treating gunshot injuries received during 1994 at \$2.3 billion.¹⁶ That study found that United States taxpayers pay for almost half of all firearms-related medical costs. According to a new book by economists at Georgetown and Duke Universities, medical expenses represent only a fraction of the true costs of gun violence. Research indicates the total cost of criminal and unintentional shootings, and gun suicides is \$100 billion annually.¹⁷

Reasons for Optimism

Although statistics regarding gun violence in the past are frightening, there is reason for optimism. According to a July 2000 study, firearms-related deaths have decreased steadily since 1993, when they reached a peak of 39, 595.¹⁸ Furthermore, in October of 2000, the U.S. Department of Justice reported that between 1993 and 1997, nonfatal firearm injuries from assaults decreased 39 percent, and firearm-related homicides fell 27 percent.¹⁹ The lowest homicide rate since 1966 was recorded in 1999, representing a 9 percent drop from 1998.²⁰ The 1999 homicide rate was 30 percent lower than in 1995, and 39 percent lower than in 1990.²¹

Although the exact reasons for these declines are hard to pinpoint, many factors are involved, such as a strong economy, low unemployment, community policing, tougher enforcement of firearm laws, stricter sentencing, changing drug markets, and a smaller population of teenagers and young adults. Changes in federal laws have also had an impact in the reduction of gun violence. The Brady Act, for example, has prevented over 585,000 gun sales to those prohibited from gun ownership, since it went into effect in 1994.²² Although legislation like the Brady Act is highly unpopular with gun lobbyists, the partnership between politicians enacting this type of legislation, and federal and state law enforcement has been highly successful. Federal and state law enforcement officials performed approximately 25 million background checks on prospective gun buyers who were prohibited from purchasing guns because they were convicted felons or prohibited for other reasons.²³

Whatever the reasons for the continued decline in violent crime and homicides, gun-related crimes remain at unacceptable levels. In Stockton, a city of 260,000 people located in the San Joaquin Valley of Northern California, the number of homicides fell from 59 in 1992, to 33 in 2000; however, firearms-related assaults increased from 444 in 1993, to 463 in 2000.

Stockton's statistics are similar to other cities throughout California and across the country. The open-air rock cocaine drug markets of the late 1980s, coupled with high unemployment and a weak economy, were principal causes of sharp increases in crime. The young people who were selling rock on the street armed themselves for protection from other dealers and those ready to forcibly

take their product and profit. Gangs grew in size for mutual protection, which fueled further increases in gun violence. The increase in guns readily available and in the hands of young males on the streets led to increased shootings to settle disputes, complete retaliations, and express bravado previously involving fists, bats, or knives.

Current Status

Research on gun violence over the past decade clearly shows that the increase in gun violence since the 1980s is due to increased firearms used by those twenty-five years old and younger. From 1977 to 1995, there was little change in the number of crimes committed by adults with handguns. The situation for youth ages eighteen to twenty-four years, and juveniles seventeen years old and under, is quite different. Since 1985, handgun homicides among youth increased over 100 percent by 1994, and juveniles' use of handguns increased over 300 percent.²⁴ The focus of law enforcement and their partnerships to reduce gun violence is certainly on the youth of this country. The makeup and mission of these partnerships will be critical to their ability to successfully impact gun violence in the future.

In order to consider the future of innovative partnerships to combat gun violence, we must look at law enforcement partnerships, currently and in the past. Some of the first law enforcement interagency partnerships involved task forces created to target drug enforcement. These partnerships usually consisted of police departments, sheriff's departments and the county district attorney's

office. Law enforcement officials recognized that trafficking of illegal drugs was a regional problem most effectively dealt with through a cooperative effort.

Although task force partnerships were somewhat effective, other cooperative efforts between agencies were scarce. Agencies found it difficult to even settle jurisdiction disputes involving criminal investigations, traffic accidents, and calls for service. It was, and in some places still is, difficult to communicate crime patterns and suspect descriptions between agencies sharing common boundaries.

As Community Policing established itself in the 1980s and 1990s, progressive leaders began to recognize the benefit of joining non-traditional partnerships to share information, resources, expertise, and expenses. Partnerships between schools and law enforcement resulted in officers being assigned to campuses for role modeling, mentoring, and instructional roles. School Resource Officers (SROs), were allowed into the classrooms to teach anti-drug programs in a non-traditional role. Partnerships were also developed between law enforcement and social services to address child protective issues. Officers and Child Protective Services personnel worked in teams to address molest and abuse cases. Law enforcement began to realize the importance of looking to causal factors and literary research, as well as their role in prevention and intervention strategies. What some in law enforcement thought was just social work and not real police work, is now recognized as valuable prevention and early intervention in reducing crime and calls for service, and improving communities' quality of life.

Gun violence is still, however, investigated by most agencies in a traditional approach. Arrests are made of those who illegally use or possess firearms, and they are incarcerated on local charges regardless of their past criminal history. Little is ever done to determine the history of a specific firearm and how it came into the hands of the perpetrator. The notion of identifying potential gun markets is usually beyond the resources of most agencies, or not a priority. The firearm, itself, is rarely checked evidentially against other crimes. Detectives with an intention of solving a particular crime to which they have been assigned, traditionally follow up on gun crimes. Some agencies utilize a type of street enforcement team to target gang members and “hot spots” that most likely turn up guns and prevent retaliation shootings.

Although the traditional approach is necessary and successful in solving many crimes, we must do more toward innovative investigations, prevention and intervention in gun violence. New technologies are available to law enforcement agencies willing to look to the future and partner with others for information, expertise, and financing.

The causal factors of violence must also be identified and impacted, especially as they relate to our youth. Individual characteristics and environmental conditions that place children and adolescents at risk of violent behavior, or that protect them from the effects of risk, must be understood. Non-traditional partnerships must be explored and developed, with an eye to the next generation of youth that is expected to be the largest since the Baby Boom. By 2007, it is anticipated there will be approximately 3 million kids between the ages

of 15 and 19 years, living in the United States.²⁵ To prevent gun violence, we must find ways to socialize the young and provide them with skills to get jobs and resist negative pressures. Current economic conditions have provided opportunities to make this possible.

A strong economy and continual declining crime rate could cause a complacency regarding preparations for the future. We must anticipate that recent declines could easily be reversed. This could occur through a resurgence of active drug markets and the violence that can accompany them through a downturn in the economy and the impact they would have in the communities where violence is most likely to re-ignite. We cannot be certain when the next increase in gun violence and homicides will occur, but the current decline cannot continue indefinitely. In fact, the California Crime Index for the year 2000 shows an overall rise of 3.5 percent.²⁶ In California in the year 2000, homicides went up 3.9 percent.²⁷ We should continue efforts to further reduce gun violence while preparing our criminal justice and community-based efforts for possible future increases. These issues emphasize the importance of future thinking. The next Section will forecast trends and events to develop options and strategies on how innovative partnerships can impact gun violence by the year 2006.

The following ten trends were identified as being prevalent with regard to reducing gun violence:

1. Focused prosecution of gun violence cases – Aggressive prosecution and follow-through for illegal use or possession of a firearm.

2. Public awareness toward gun violence – People actively confronting gun violence and control issues.
3. Use of diverse multi-agency task forces to reduce gun violence – Agencies joining together in partnerships/collaborative efforts.
4. Federal government involvement at the local level – Increased federal support for manpower to assist in investigations, participation in joint task forces, funding assistance in major case investigations, grants, equipment, new technology, and federal prosecutions.
5. Law enforcement partnerships with Mental Health – Mental health is willing to train law enforcement to deal with the mentally ill and provide appropriate referrals to those in need.
6. Use of technology to identify and investigate illegal gun markets – New electronic tracing system now accessible online at ATF offices across the nation.
7. Availability of services for at-risk youth – Services needed for youth at risk for delinquent and criminal behavior.
8. Violence in schools – Overall school violence is leveling off but more prevention and preparation needs to take place.
9. Level of gun violence in the media – The constant barrage of violence through the media definitely causes individuals, especially kids, to become desensitized to violence.

10. Community-Oriented Policing/Problem-Oriented Policing – Provides a forum for law enforcement to discuss crime prevention, ongoing crime problems, and education on gun safety issues and laws.

A Desired State

The following optimistic scenario was developed to illustrate a future desired state for a law enforcement agency to reach by 2006:

Stockton Police Department Special Investigations Section, June 1, 2006

Lieutenant Jim Stone hangs up the phone with a smile on his face. A friend from Command College had called asking for help regarding ongoing gun violence occurring in his city. His friend lamented to him that they have limited resources available within his department to do any proactive work toward affecting violent trends. He went on to say that his Sheriff is close-minded when it comes to working with other agencies, believing they can handle their own problems and that he doesn't want to get tied down in task forces or partnerships. The smile on Stone's face is a reflection of his satisfaction with his agency and his Chief, who years ago, had the foresight to listen to his staff regarding proactive programs and long-term strategies. Stone could think of three programs established over the past three years that have been highly successful in reducing violent crime, especially gun-related crimes. Lieutenant Stone agreed to send his friend a brief outline of the programs, and the role they are playing in moving Stockton toward a better, safer future.

The first of the newly established programs was a multi-agency partnership called Operation Peacekeeper, built on three components to reduce gun violence. The components included prevention, intervention, and enforcement. The partnership was made up of all law enforcement agencies in the county, along with Parole, Probation, the FBI, ATF, District Attorney's Office, and the United States Attorney's Office. The partnership was supported by Youth Outreach workers employed jointly by the City and County, as well as local non-profit organizations that provide intense outreach to at-risk youth and their families. The partnership meets regularly in a large briefing room at the new Stockton Police Department Essential Services Building. The prevention component involves a small team of representatives from each agency going to schools, CYA, Juvenile Hall, and other meeting places to speak frankly and openly to at-risk youth about the consequences of their actions if they continue their current way of life. The discussions are followed by Youth Outreach workers who offer a variety of services, including job training and placement, education, health services, and counseling. Any member of the Peacekeeper group can make a referral to the Youth Outreach workers to link them up with services. The intervention component revolves around the Youth Outreach workers contacting kids on the streets and in schools daily. The Outreach workers, some of them former gang members, establish a rapport with the kids, offering help when necessary, and diffusing trouble before it starts. Oftentimes, information is provided to the police about who is the driving force behind these violent crimes, who is carrying guns, and who is supplying guns. The

enforcement component involves a team of uniformed officers called the Gang Street Enforcement Team (GSET), working out of the Gang Unit, and whose mission is to contact gang members on the street to gather information, arrest wanted individuals, diffuse hostilities, and identify at-risk youth in need of help. Another part of the enforcement model involves Probation and Parole Officers working at night with the GSET Team, making home visits to enforce the conditions of probation and parole. Getting guns and ammunition off the street is a priority of the nighttime contacts.

A second program is the Firearms Unit that is housed within the Gang Unit of the Stockton Police Department. The Firearms Unit consists of three officers from the Stockton Police Department, an ATF agent, a DOJ firearm investigator, a detective from the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department, a crime analyst, and a Deputy District Attorney. This unit reviews every gun case that occurs in San Joaquin County. Information on each gun that is booked into evidence in San Joaquin County is entered into the new ATF Electronic Tracing System, which downloads trace information for entry into a nationwide database. The Firearms Unit can then access this trace information to track and investigate the movement of guns throughout San Joaquin County and identify potentially illegal gun markets. The Firearms Unit also works closely with Stockton Police Crime Lab personnel who operate the Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS). Every firearm booked into evidence in San Joaquin County is test-fired, with the bullet and casing information entered into a nationwide database for ongoing computer comparison. Matches are identified and reported within one hour.

The third program involves eight Neighborhood Service Centers located around Stockton, and another five throughout San Joaquin County. The Neighborhood Service Centers are storefront centers located in strip-malls, schools, and neighborhoods. They are staffed by law enforcement, Mental Health, Social Services, health care providers, school nurses, and Probation Officers. Services are offered on site to those in need. The Neighborhood Service Centers provide easy access to key resources necessary to help break patterns of violence. Residents know these resources are available to them and are located nearby.

Lieutenant Stone finishes the outline with positive statistics. Homicides had gone down each of the past five years, with a twenty-year low of fifteen homicides in 2005. The number of documented gang members had declined to 1,800 from a high of 3,500 in 1995. The number of drive-by shootings had been reduced by 37 percent over the past 3 years. The number of guns booked into evidence at the Stockton Police Department in 2005 was 486, compared to 1,250 in 1996. Stone expects these trends to continue, although he knows continued research of new and innovative ways to prevent crime is essential.

Summary

In researching the topic of gun violence, the scope of the resulting devastation and trauma was staggering. The cost of human lives, alone, justifies development and implementation of plans to reduce gun violence. When the

added concerns of shattered families, chronic offending, medical costs, and overall fear are considered, we wonder why more wasn't done long ago.

Although the results of gun violence are obvious and can be statistically quantified, the causal factors are somewhat elusive. Poverty, mental illness, rage, jealousy, criminal intent, opportunity, association, and ignorance can individually, or together, produce conditions that cultivate violence. Research has shown that young people are the primary victims and perpetrators of violent crime, including the crime of homicide.

Although traditional reactive responses by law enforcement to gun violence are essential and appropriate, this project points to innovative processes and partnerships aimed at prevention and intervention as the key to further reducing violent crime in the future. Statistics indicate all crime has been falling for a decade. The most recent statistics indicate, however, crime in California began to rise in 2000. Even though it is unknown if this rise will continue, the philosophy of this plan is to attack the violence issue aggressively with the future in mind. It is clear that law enforcement cannot accomplish this alone. Other disciplines can offer various pieces of the puzzle to reduce gun violence. Society can become safer once most pieces of the puzzle are in place. To pull these various disciplines into effective partnerships, leadership, vision, and organization are essential.

Implications on Leadership

The pressures placed upon law enforcement come from a variety of sources and in varying degrees. These pressures may be internally- or externally-driven. No matter what the degree or source, these pressures have crucial implications on leadership. This is especially true concerning law enforcement's role in affecting gun violence. The seriousness of this issue demands that law enforcement never becomes complacent or retreats from its responsibilities to reduce this menace. The implications are too great in view of the trust, credibility and safety at stake within the community and department.

Law enforcement's changing role gives leadership an opportunity to make a difference. Community-Oriented Policing has already established law enforcement as a leader in the community. Law enforcement leaders must seize this opportunity to strengthen their position by building new collaborations through communication and innovation. These strong partnerships can help law enforcement and society conquer a variety of crime and quality-of-life issues.

There will be times when law enforcement leaders will be called upon to provide assistance under the leadership of other organizations, perhaps outside the law enforcement community. True leaders will recognize this opportunity to show their commitment to cooperation and teamwork, and building bridges to future coalitions.

The risks of doing nothing are great. Agencies that reject alliances and organizational change will fall behind and risk letting the future dictate to them

instead of creating their own direction and desired future. The consequences of failed vision and missed opportunities can cost lives and years of recovery.

Doing the right thing also has risks. There will be “snaildarters” along the way, who are ready to sabotage positive efforts out of fear, jealousy, ego, or feelings of superiority. A potential snail darter in this effort would be a necessary agency not willing to join the partnership because of a lack of resources or philosophical differences. That’s why early communication and buy-in among department leaders is so critical. Strong leaders must be vigilant to these hazards by anticipating them, and continuing to move forward.

Chief executives cannot prepare for the future and manage organizational change on their own. Problem identification, analysis, ideas, and continued support must come from management staff as part of their leadership role. Development and implementation of a strategic plan to reduce gun violence must evolve from the entire management team, not just the divisions and sections directly involved.

Conclusions

This article focused on the impact of innovative partnerships on gun violence in the future. Literary research indicates young people represent a high percentage of victims and offenders of gun violence. The optimistic scenario starting on page fifteen describes a program focused on at-risk youth, with a goal of preventing youth violence through changed behaviors and environment, and providing opportunities for success. A multi-agency collaboration was described

with an intent of intervention and enforcement toward youth and adults who are at risk of violently offending and re-offending. The collaboration also included creation of a Firearms Investigations Unit, utilizing new technologies and investigative techniques. These strategies were later expanded into a strategic planning and transition management process, as part of the preparation and implementation of organizational change.

The Stockton Police Department has implemented parts of all three partnership strategies although more work needs to be done and new ideas developed in the future. Some effects the strategies will have on effecting gun violence will be measured by evaluating and analyzing gun crime, arrest, and youth-offending statistics in the future. Tracking the progress of youths served by Neighborhood Services Centers will also provide valuable insight into the effectiveness of the program. The goal to deter youth from entering into a life of crime and violence will have a positive impact on the related pain and suffering which currently exists. Indicators and casual factors of gun violence are identified in a variety of ways, depending on numerous individual and environmental factors. It's unknown the exact impact these or any other programs will have on reducing gun violence. It is clear, however, that law enforcement has an obligation, as well as the knowledge, ability, and resources necessary to impact gun violence. It must focus on trends which are currently evident, while at the same time, have a vision to forecast how its response to those trends will affect the future. We have an obligation to plan for the safest future possible. If law enforcement does anticipate the future, we stand a better

chance of reducing gun violence and saving lives. If the partnerships presented here are implemented with commitment and enthusiasm in a long-term effort, gun violence can be reduced, violent offenders will be taken off the street, and our youth will have a better chance to resist the negative influences that prey upon them.

ENDNOTES

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