



# Missed Opportunities:

Why Inaction on Preventative Measures  
Undermines Public Safety in Washington, DC

## Introduction

There is no denying that the United States broadly – and the District of Columbia specifically – have seen increases in some types of crimes over the past several years. Still, political and media sound bites perpetuate misconceptions about the prevalence and scope of increases. Those misconceptions fuel fear amongst the public and point to policy responses that do little to nothing to address the actual underlying causes of crime and violence. In Washington, DC, for example, some crimes have increased at an alarming rate, particularly gun-involved crimes and carjackings.<sup>1</sup> But while politicians and media outlets speak to a widespread crime wave and call for increases in harsh penalties and investing millions more dollars in police, the simple fact is that typically both the victims and perpetrators of gun-involved crimes in the District are young Black men who have a history of criminal involvement and have grown up in communities characterized by historically high levels of disadvantage, marginalization, and oppression. We cannot solve these problems simply by hiring more police officers, beefing up juvenile curfew laws, and doling out harsher sentences.

Effectively addressing the root causes of violence requires a comprehensive public health approach that addresses the underlying risk factors. Yet, while District leaders' rhetoric speaks to a public health approach,<sup>2</sup> recent policy proposals have focused much more on suppression efforts. At the same time, prevention and programming continue to be neglected and underfunded, despite legislation and public investments in public health priorities. The District had identified several innovative solutions from years when the DC Council was forward looking and invested in preventative policies, programs, task forces, and research. However, Mayor Bowser and her administration have done little to fund and implement the recommendations.

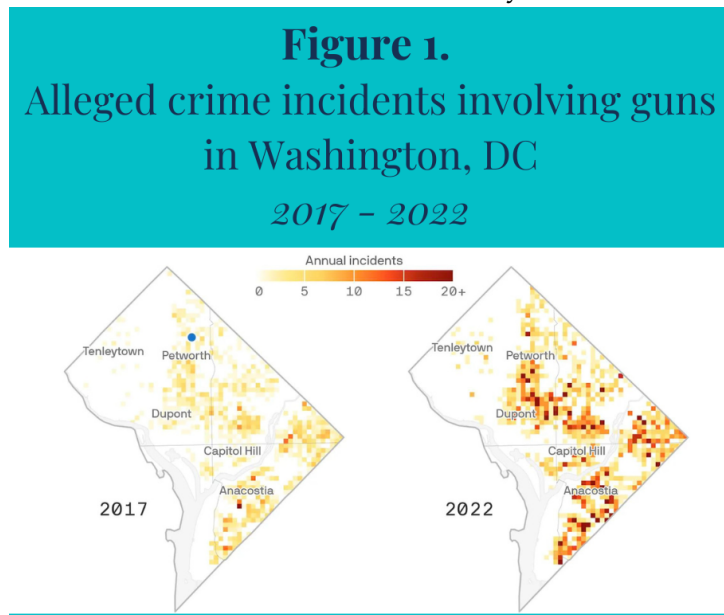
Simply stated, Washington, DC, cannot afford to move backward. Leaders must focus on what works and take comprehensive and effective action to prevent and address crime. This brief:

- Provides an overview of recent crime trends in the District.
- Highlights current policy proposals that are poorly matched to the underlying problems.
- Synthesizes concrete recommendations for an effective approach that includes improving coordination among agencies, focusing resources on the people at the center of violence, investing in community-based services and supports, funding efforts to build community trust and efficacy in policing, and evaluating and sustaining effective interventions.

## Understanding Violent Crime and What Works to Stop It

In the District, just like other major cities in the US, most violent crime is highly concentrated in a small number of places and among specific groups of people.<sup>3</sup> Most serious crime occurs in neighborhoods that have experienced years of disinvestment, marginalization, oppression, surveillance, coercion, and control and are, by and large, communities of color.<sup>4</sup> Aside from carjackings, the starkest crime increases are gun-involved crimes and homicides, most of which have and continue to occur in historically disadvantaged Black neighborhoods, including Wards 7 and 8 east of the Anacostia River, and areas in and around Shaw, Florida Avenue NW, and H Street NE (see Figure 1).<sup>5</sup> Gun-involved crimes in the District increased by 40 percent between 2017 and 2022,<sup>6</sup> and homicides have also been on the rise over that period (see Figure 2).<sup>7</sup> The

latest year-to-date data show that homicides were up 32 percent between 2022 and 2023 alone.<sup>8</sup> Both the victims and suspects in homicide cases and non-fatal shootings in the District are primarily male, Black, and between the ages of 18 and 34.<sup>9</sup> A recent report starkly summarized this decades-long truth: “In Washington, DC, most gun violence is tightly concentrated on a small number of very high-risk young Black male adults that share a common set of risk factors, including: involvement in street crews/groups; significant criminal justice history including prior or active community supervision; often prior victimization; and a connection to a recent shooting (within the past 12 months).”<sup>10</sup> In other words, though no one should ever be a victim of gun violence, if you are not a young Black male experiencing those risk factors, your likelihood of being shot in the District of Columbia remains extraordinarily low.



Source: Paige Hopkins, “Gun violence is on the rise in D.C.,” *Axios D.C.*, February 23, 2023, <https://www.axios.com/local/washington-dc/2023/02/23/gun-violence-increase-dc>.



Source: “District Crime Data at a Glance,” Metropolitan Police Department, <https://mpdc.dc.gov/page/district-crime-data-glance>

District residents, politicians, and media outlets are keenly aware of increasing violence, but proposed solutions are often a mismatch to the underlying problems. For example, you don't have to search far to find headlines about youth crime spikes,<sup>11</sup> a central talking point in Mayor Bowser's public safety briefing this summer.<sup>12</sup> In response, she launched a "juvenile curfew enforcement pilot" in September, although research consistently shows that curfews are not effective in reducing crime and victimization.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, while youth crime is up for some offenses, including carjackings, the vast majority of serious and violent crimes in the District are perpetrated by adults.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, news reports would have residents believe that recent corrections reforms, like the Incarceration Reduction and Second Look Amendment Acts that allow incarcerated people to appeal for shortened sentences, are driving spikes in carjackings and homicides.<sup>15</sup> Both emergency legislation passed in the spring<sup>16</sup> and new public safety policy proposals advanced by the DC Council<sup>17</sup> enhance penalties for serious offenses. In fact, research has shown that lengthy prison terms are not an effective deterrent to crime<sup>18</sup>, and both research and experience have shown that recidivism rates among those released early from prison are very low.<sup>19</sup> In all these cases, the policy solutions proposed are not likely to produce the outcomes intended, namely increasing safety for residents of the District.

In fact, preventing and addressing gun violence is a complex challenge that requires a comprehensive approach involving both proactive prevention tactics and strategies that address the root causes of crime. As Thomas Abt – a leading scholar in the field – succinctly summarized, "No city has arrested their way out of this challenge or simply programmed their way out, for that matter."<sup>20</sup> Luckily, we have learned a lot about effective prevention and intervention strategies over the past twenty years. While a comprehensive literature review on effective violence prevention and intervention strategies is beyond the scope of this paper, Abt provides a useful framework for effectively addressing violence through three pillars: focus, balance, and fairness. In his words:

***Focus** means focusing attention on the small numbers of people and places that, in any jurisdiction, contribute disproportionately to urban violence. **Balance** is about using both suppression and prevention to stop violence, offering potential offenders both sticks and carrots. **Fairness** involves making sure that those most impacted by violence – i.e., those living in poor communities of color – view your anti-violence strategy as fair and legitimate.<sup>21</sup>*

This framework points to investing in and building a more effective police force, community-based supports and services, and common-sense gun reforms to limit access. It supports reforming police departments to build community trust and providing young people at high risk of violence with credible mentorship and opportunities to make better choices. And it highlights the need to focus both on individual- and community-level strategies to disrupt cycles of violence and increase access to critical supports and services for young people in communities disproportionately impacted by both crime and legal system involvement. A few short years ago, momentum in the District was growing behind efforts to legislate and advance strategies in these areas, but times have changed.

## Washington, DC, Leaders Are Moving in the Wrong Direction

Though once considered a national leader in innovative strategies for justice-involved emerging adults (18-to-24-year-olds),<sup>22</sup> the District has changed course, and years of progress are beginning to unravel. During a period of historically low crime rates, District leaders identified, legislated, and launched several smart strategies to prevent future violence, but few have been fully funded or implemented. Further, recent policy proposals by both the Council and the Mayor's office harken back to the "tough on crime" playbook of the 1990s that fueled mass incarceration and did little to address the underlying causes of crime. District leaders are moving in the wrong direction by allowing effective programming and promising ideas to wither on the vine and leaning into surveillance and corrections strategies to address upticks in crime. For example:

- **Progress Has Stalled on Implementation of the Neighborhood Engagement Achieve Results (NEAR) Act:** In 2016, the DC Council unanimously passed the NEAR Act, which provided a comprehensive, public health framework that centered community-based solutions to promote public safety and reduce crime in the District.<sup>23</sup> Though it took two years to fully fund, early implementation efforts built important infrastructure for effective violence prevention and intervention. For example, the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement launched the Violence Intervention Initiative (VI),<sup>24</sup> a collaborative community engagement strategy that deploys violence interrupters to high-crime communities to detect and mediate conflicts among those at highest risk of violence, and the Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants implemented a hospital-based violence prevention program to support violently injured individuals at the critical time when they are being treated before returning to the community.

Yet, progress stalled during the pandemic, and reports by the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor in 2022 and 2023 documented wide variations in the implementation of various provisions of the NEAR Act. The 2022 report noted that the DC Department of Health never established an Office of Violence Prevention and Health Equity. Moreover, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and the Department of Behavioral Health never created officer-clinician teams better positioned to respond to mental health crises.<sup>25</sup> The 2022 report also flagged the need for an independent study of the impact of the VI, as community engagement has not been consistently strong.<sup>26</sup> The 2023 report highlighted that, while MPD has collected and reported data on police stops, it has not used that information to develop policies to increase benefits and reduce harm from those stops.<sup>27</sup> Notably, it took several years of litigation by the ACLU for MPD to comply with the requirement to release the data.<sup>28</sup> The 2023 report also noted that two key workgroups – the Comprehensive Homicide Elimination Strategy Task Force and MPD's Community Policing Working Group – have dissolved due to senior officials' lack of support and action.<sup>29</sup>

- **Leaders Have Taken Limited Action on the Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan (GVRS):** In 2022, the DC Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and Office of Gun Violence Prevention commissioned a comprehensive plan to reduce gun violence in the

District.<sup>30</sup> Notably, the plan opens with an assessment that, “The District is unique in that it is one of the few cities in the country that has the needed talent, ability, and resources to drastically reduce gun violence in the city. However, it is lacking the political commitment, coordination, and a coherent strategy to reduce gun violence.” (p.3) While District leaders have taken some steps to implement key provisions, progress has stalled. There has been a lack of consistency in leaders of key agencies, including the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, and the consequences are dire. For example, in the spring of 2022, following urging from the DC Attorney General who leveraged \$3 million to implement CURE the Streets in the District, Mayor Bowser launched the People of Promise initiative that focuses resources and supports on 200 people identified as being at the highest risk of violence in the city.<sup>31</sup> But a year and a half in, we have no information on how many people the program has reached, how it has been implemented, or what outcomes it has produced. A forthcoming report from the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, the organization that identified those on the list, shows the impact of that lack of action – numerous people identified were later killed, shot, or arrested.<sup>32</sup> Simply stated, the District lacks both the specificity and intensity required to target resources on those at the highest risk and provide a level of support that can effectively interrupt violence.

- **Effective Programming like the Young Men Emerging Unit in the DC Jail is Faltering:** In addition to the stalled implementation of new ideas, a lack of leadership in key public safety agencies has led to declines in existing programming. For example, the Young Men Emerging (YME) unit in the DC Jail is an innovative program launched in 2018 that pairs people serving longer sentences with emerging adults aged 18 to 25 in the jail. Mentors support rehabilitation, help mentees navigate the criminal legal system, and prepare them for next steps in a community setting or a federal facility. Based on early successes in the jail, agency leaders were considering replicating the unit in the Central Detention Facility and considering how to implement core elements of the model in community supervision settings. However, following a change in leaders at the Department of Corrections, several programs in the jail have been dropped, and while the YME unit technically still exists, it is a shell of the original program. Other innovative programs, including the Lead Up! and Lead Out! employment programs and education units, have also been cut back. Relatedly, the District just settled a lawsuit over its failure to provide incarcerated students with adequate education during the pandemic.<sup>33</sup>
- **Recent Legislative Proposals Focus on Suppression and Increased Penalties:** Despite earlier investments in a more comprehensive violence reduction approach, recent proposals from Mayor Bowser and Councilmember Pinto have prioritized law enforcement strategies and increased penalties to combat the recent uptick in violence. In May 2023, Bowser introduced the Safer Stronger Amendment Act, which proposed enhanced penalties for violent crimes and illegal gun possession, expanded pretrial detention for youth and adults, and revisions that would have rolled back the city’s “Second Look” provision to consider early release for some people serving long prison

terms.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, she directed more *planning and research* on a “whole-of-government approach to crime reduction,”<sup>35</sup> and it is unclear whether those plans were ever created and submitted.

Though some provisions were scaled back, most of the Safer Stronger legislation was passed in emergency legislation, the Prioritizing Public Safety Emergency Amendment Act of 2023, which was effective for 90 days.<sup>36</sup> In September 2023, Councilmember Pinto introduced a package of bills – the Secure DC Plan<sup>37</sup> – that would make many provisions in the emergency legislation permanent and further increase surveillance and penalties. For example, the package includes new proposals that would subject any person convicted of a gun offense who is on court supervision to random search and seizure and require judges to submit a written statement defending their release of any person charged with a violent offense pretrial. The package included little to support other prevention and intervention efforts beyond a roundtable to discuss better coordination among existing programs.

In October 2023, Mayor Bowser introduced additional legislation: the Address Crime Trends Now Act (ACT Now), which doubled down on suppression and expanded penalties.<sup>38</sup> If passed, it would allow police to search certain people without cause, make it even harder for judges to release people accused of certain crimes before their trial, and scale back important provisions of Washington, DC’s recent police reform bill designed to improve efficacy and build community trust.<sup>39</sup> Then, in November 2023, the mayor issued a public emergency on the opioid crisis and youth violence focused primarily on adding beds in the Youth Services Center – the local youth jail – and incentivizing private companies to expand out-of-home placements to address increases in crime perpetrated by young people,<sup>40</sup> while at the same time winding down oversight of the Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services which oversees youth corrections in the District.<sup>41</sup> Relatedly, Mayor Bowser has failed to advance any notable efforts to fund and implement the Youth Rehabilitation Act Strategic Plan from 2021 that provides a framework for improving services and supports for emerging adults involved or at risk of involvement in the legal system.<sup>42</sup>

- **Washington, DC’s Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act of 2022 Remains Unfunded:** In December 2022, the DC Council unanimously passed the Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act (CPJRA) to increase accountability and improve transparency in cases of officer misconduct.<sup>43</sup> These common sense reforms were based on recommendations of the DC Police Reform Commission, which convened over a period of nine months and issued a detailed report with more than 100 specific recommendations for reducing reliance on police and improving civilian oversight, including strategies to invest in community-based violence prevention and intervention. Yet, as of September 2023, neither the DC Council nor the mayor have moved to appropriate funds for implementation. Without funding, none of the provisions will be realized. Further, as noted above, the mayor’s proposed ACT Now legislation rolls back

important provisions of the CPJRA and, if passed, would allow officers to review body-worn camera footage prior to filing their reports, decrease transparency around officer disciplinary actions, and limit restrictions on the use of chokeholds.

## Now Is the Time to Act and Implement Smart Strategies to Prevent and Address Violence

Washington, DC, like many major cities, is in a challenging time, grappling with the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, which illuminated and magnified inequalities that – like all social challenges – disproportionately impacted communities of color that have been marginalized and disinvested in for decades. In the District, some crimes are increasing at a significant rate, resources are stretched, and residents are rightfully demanding that leaders implement effective solutions to keep people safe.<sup>44</sup> Now is not the time to go backward, undoing a decade of progress. Now is the time to lean into smart strategies to address the root causes of violence and increase the government’s focus, coordination, and effectiveness in preventing and addressing crime. District leaders have a large menu of existing recommendations to choose from, including:

### Improve coordination between agencies working to prevent and address violent crime.

Several recent audits and reports in the District have pointed to a lack of coordination between agencies working to promote public safety.<sup>45</sup> Specific recommendations include:

- Develop strategies to ensure consistent, effective leadership in all key public safety agencies, including the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, the Metropolitan Police Department, and the Office of Neighborhood Engagement.
- Establish stronger memoranda of understanding between local and federal agencies to support data sharing and develop and maintain a central database that tracks District residents and the services they receive from different local and federal agencies.<sup>46</sup>
- Convene regular meetings with all relevant parties to review shooting incidents, gather intelligence, and identify and assign people to outreach and engage with those involved. This requires regular and ongoing collaboration among agencies at both the local and federal levels, including the Metropolitan Police Department, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, Office of Neighborhood Safety and Prevention, Department of Corrections, Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services, Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Mayor’s Office, as well as close collaboration with community-based organizations supporting the Violence Intervention, Credible Messenger, and Cure the Streets programs.
- Create a staff position within the Executive Office of the Mayor responsible for coordinating and implementing the Youth Rehabilitation Act and District-wide response to addressing the needs of emerging adults as outlined in Councilmember Robert White’s Whole Government Response to Crime Act of 2023.<sup>47</sup>



- Require regular data sharing on government-funded public safety program processes and outcomes.<sup>48</sup>
- Consider reconvening important accountability and coordination entities like the Comprehensive Homicide Elimination Strategy Task Force and MPD's Community Policing Working Group and act on their recommendations.

### Focus comprehensive resources on the specific people at the center of violence.

Effective violence intervention requires leaders to focus intense resources on the specific people involved in violent acts. Though both the Violence Intervention and People of Promise programs were launched with this goal in mind, neither have succeeded in either intensity or specificity. In other words, services are not intensive enough and are also not reaching those they are intended to reach. Specific recommendations include:

- Build infrastructure and staffing to support a comprehensive approach to violence prevention and intervention, including investment in additional social workers, mentors, case managers, and violence interrupters who can provide critical case management and services for people in communities disproportionately impacted by crime and violence.
- Increase the number of credible messengers and violence intervention workers, foundational support people who are uniquely and best positioned to build relationships, create community, and invest in young people and emerging adults to show them a different future.<sup>49</sup>
- Professionalize and support mentors and violence intervention workers and roles by providing regular training and professional development, pay and benefits commensurate with the risk and responsibility they take on in these roles, job security and upward economic mobility, and mental health and trauma-informed support to help them cope with the experiences they regularly encounter through the course of their work.<sup>50</sup>
- Provide mentors and violence intervention workers with discretionary funds that they can use to support the young people on their caseloads.
- Prioritize the specific people identified at high risk of engagement in gun violence for services to engage and connect each one with a Credible Messenger or Case Manager to provide intensive support and connect them with services and opportunities as appropriate.<sup>51</sup>

### Implement a holistic public health approach to violence prevention and intervention and invest in supports and services in communities disproportionately impacted by crime and legal system involvement.

Embracing a public health approach to violence prevention requires investment in services, supports, and opportunities in neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by crime and violence. More specifically, it requires establishing a continuum of developmentally appropriate

community-based services for emerging adults, covering the areas of education, workforce development, behavioral and physical health care, housing, family, and reentry needs.<sup>52</sup> Specific recommendations include:

- Increase trauma-informed, healing-centered, and restorative services specifically developed for emerging adults.<sup>53</sup>
- Expand housing programming to serve the unique needs of emerging adults, including expanding and potentially relocating existing housing programming, such as DHS Youth HOPE, to serve emerging adults and offer funding opportunities to develop community-based supportive programming.
- Explore creative strategies to expand housing options for emerging adults, including direct cash transfers for unhoused young people.<sup>54</sup>
- Provide guidance to existing programs to prioritize serving emerging adults who are at high risk of participating in, or being victims of, violent crimes, particularly coordinating among agencies and programs providing housing resources in the District.
- Expand pre- and post-arrest diversion options and restorative practices for young people who encounter law enforcement and the courts to connect them with community-based resources and minimize deeper involvement in the legal system.
- Expand existing educational programming to serve the unique needs of emerging adults. Educational programs available for adults must prioritize emerging adults who are at high risk of participating in, or being victims of, violent crimes.
- Support the development of new community-based year-round work/employment programs, guide workforce programs, and inform programs on best practices to serve emerging adults and system-involved emerging adults.
- Expand Washington, DC's place-based initiatives working to support blight abatement and community improvements.<sup>55</sup>
- Launch a guaranteed income pilot program modeled after research-based initiatives like the Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration and build on early successes of the THRIVE East of the River program to help residents meet basic needs and promote healthy communities.<sup>56</sup>

### Fund efforts to build community trust and efficacy in policing.

Law enforcement is a core partner in violence prevention and intervention. Still, to build community trust and improve efficacy in policing, the District must fully fund and implement common sense policing policies and practices. Washington, DC has a strong blueprint for change in the Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act,<sup>57</sup> passed in 2022, and it is imperative that the mayor and Council appropriate funds to support full implementation. Specific recommendations include:<sup>58</sup>

- Make behavioral healthcare professionals and other specialists the default first responders to people in crisis and create and implement teams of co-trained behavioral health specialists and law enforcement officers to respond to people in crisis who pose a danger to themselves or others.
- Increase the number of personnel in community-building and alternative public safety programs while reducing the number of law enforcement officers in the District, which has more police officers per capita than any other large city in the United States.<sup>59</sup>
- Increase funding for the DC Department of Behavioral Health to expand programming and improve residents' access to community-based and culturally responsive behavioral healthcare and wellness services, including treatment for substance use disorders.
- Expand wellness programming and behavioral health supports for law enforcement officers to ensure they have a responsive and safe work environment.
- Increase transparency and accountability by collecting comprehensive data on law enforcement stops, searches, arrests, and use of force, and using that information to assess, inform, and refine policies, training, supervision, and discipline practices.
- Conduct a comprehensive staffing study of the Metropolitan Police Department, including a time utilization analysis to understand where and how officers are spending their time, and use findings to develop a clear summary of overall staffing needs for both sworn officers and civilian workers to operate effectively and efficiently, as well as targeted strategies to reduce the use of mandatory overtime for officers.
- Improve accountability by reestablishing the Police Officers Standards and Training Board, increasing funding, and giving it more authority over training, recruitment, and retention, and bolstering existing oversight entities, including the Police Complaints Board and the Office of Police Complaints.
- Prevent law enforcement agencies in the District from hiring officers who have engaged in serious misconduct in another department.
- Adopt safer, more respectful search procedures, including a ban on no-knock warrants and strict limits on quick-knock raids.
- Establish a presumption of citation instead of arrest for low-level offenses to limit arrests and expand diversion.

### Evaluate and sustain effective programs and initiatives.

As noted above, one challenge in the District is that leaders have launched several concurrent initiatives to prevent and address violence. Still, there is not often follow through to assess whether they are effective. There is a pressing need for District leaders to evaluate new and existing initiatives to inform program improvements and allow leaders to invest in the most effective strategies. Priority programs and initiatives include:

- People of Promise Initiative;<sup>60</sup>
- Violence Intervention Initiative;<sup>61</sup>
- Young Men Emerging Unit in the DC Jail;<sup>62</sup>
- Cure the Streets;<sup>63</sup>
- Pathways Program;<sup>64</sup>
- Credible Messengers;<sup>65</sup> and
- Community Response Teams.<sup>66</sup>

## Conclusion

Like many localities across the United States, Washington, DC is at a critical crossroads as it grapples with increases in certain crimes and public demands for effective solutions. Thanks to the foresight of the DC Council and some city leaders, the District is well-positioned to implement smart strategies to prevent and address violent crime. Over the past couple of decades, District leaders have invested in research, laid the necessary groundwork, and have several frameworks they can now draw upon to refocus crime prevention efforts. The stakes are too high for the District to go backward. Now is not the time to retreat to the outdated, “tough on crime” playbook of the 1990s that fueled mass incarceration and did little to promote public safety or address the underlying causes of crime and violence. We cannot arrest our way out of the problems of marginalization and violence. Now is the time to lean in on what works and invest in a comprehensive approach that fully funds proven community-based prevention and intervention programs and improves safety for District residents. Young people’s lives literally depend on it.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> “District Crime Data at a Glance,” Metropolitan Police Department, last modified November 14, 2023, <https://mpdc.dc.gov/page/district-crime-data-glance>.
- <sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Pal Duggan, “D.C. mayor declares gun violence a ‘public health crisis,’ proposes new solutions,” *The Washington Post*, February 17, 2021, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/washington-gun-violence-prevention/2021/02/17/ad5793dc-714a-11eb-85fa-e0ccb3660358\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/washington-gun-violence-prevention/2021/02/17/ad5793dc-714a-11eb-85fa-e0ccb3660358_story.html). See also Kristi King, “‘Public health approach,’ tougher gun trafficking penalties considered to tackle DC gun violence,” WTOP News, October 4, 2019, <https://wtop.com/dc/2019/10/public-health-approach-tougher-gun-trafficking-penalties-considered-to-tackle-dc-gun-violence/>.
- <sup>3</sup> *Washington, DC Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan* (Washington, D.C.: National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, 2022), [https://cjcc.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cjcc/page\\_content/attachments/DC%20Violence%20Reduction%20Strategic%20Plan%20-%20April%202022.pdf](https://cjcc.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cjcc/page_content/attachments/DC%20Violence%20Reduction%20Strategic%20Plan%20-%20April%202022.pdf); see also David Weisburd, “The Law of Crime Concentration and the Criminology of Place,” *Criminology*, 53 (2) (2015): 133-157.
- <sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Hinton and DeAnza Cook, “The Mass Criminalization of Black Americans: A Historical Overview,” *Annual Review of Criminology*, 4, no.1 (2021): 261-86; see Soss and Weaver, “Police Are Our Government: Politics, Political Science, and the Policing of Race-Class Subjugated Communities,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20 (2017): 565-91; see Soss and Weaver, “Learning from Ferguson: welfare, criminal justice, and the political science of race and class. In *The Double Bind: The Politics of Racial and Class Inequalities in the Americas*,” (2016): 73-99; see also, “Task Force on Racial and Class Inequalities in the Americas,” American Political Science Association (2016).
- <sup>5</sup> Paige Hopkins, “Gun violence is on the rise in D.C.” *Axios D.C.*, February 23, 2023, <https://www.axios.com/local/washington-dc/2023/02/23/gun-violence-increase-dc>.
- <sup>6</sup> “State of Crime Meeting with Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners,” Executive Office of the Mayor, last modified January 21, 2023, <https://mayor.dc.gov/release/state-crime-meeting-advisory-neighborhood-commissioners-presentation>.
- <sup>7</sup> “District Crime Data at a Glance”
- <sup>8</sup> “District Crime Data at a Glance,” retrieved December 3, 2023.
- <sup>9</sup> *Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan*.
- <sup>10</sup> *Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan*, 9.
- <sup>11</sup> See, e.g., “As juvenile crime soars, DC attorney general targets conservatives instead,” *Washington Examiner*, October 3, 2023, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/editorials/as-juvenile-crime-soars-dc-attorney-general-targets-conservatives-instead>; see David Lippman, “Data show surge in juvenile arrests ahead of DC curfew crackdown,” WUSA-TV, September 1, 2023, <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/verify/verify-data-shows-surge-juvenile-arrests-dc-curfew/65-99d67463-65ac-4eac-b6e1-20818182f8e9>; see also, “Washington D.C. has a crime problem. It lies in our youth,” *CIW Reports: Comments and Content from Cornell in Washington*, <https://blogs.cornell.edu/issues/2023/07/18/washington-d-c-has-a-crime-problem-it-lies-in-our-youth/>.
- <sup>12</sup> “Mayor Bowser reminds residents that the juvenile curfew enforcement pilot begins on September 1,” Executive Office of the Mayor, August 31, 2023, <https://mayor.dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-reminds-residents-juvenile-curfew-enforcement-pilot-begins-september-1>
- <sup>13</sup> David B. Wilson, et al., “Juvenile Curfew Effects on Criminal Behavior and Victimization: A Systematic Review,” *Campbell Collaboration Systematic Review*, 12 (1) (2016): 1-97.
- <sup>14</sup> “District Crime Data at a Glance,”; see also discussion in “How is DC reacting to youth crime?,” DC Crime Facts, last modified September 20, 2023, [https://dccrimefacts.substack.com/p/how-is-dc-reacting-to-youth-crime?utm\\_source=profile&utm\\_medium=reader2](https://dccrimefacts.substack.com/p/how-is-dc-reacting-to-youth-crime?utm_source=profile&utm_medium=reader2).
- <sup>15</sup> Washington D.C. Council, Bill 25-0219, “Safer Stronger Amendment Act of 2023,” May 16, 2023, <https://lms.dccouncil.gov/downloads/LIMS/53020/Introduction/B25-0291-Introduction.pdf?Id=161560>; see Jessica Chasmar, “DC poised to soften penalties for carjacking, other violent crimes, despite mayor’s veto,” *Fox News*, January 16, 2023, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/dc-poised-soften-penalties-carjacking-violent-crimes-despite-mayors-veto>; see also Victor Nava, “Republicans celebrate as Biden signs resolution to reverse DC crime bill,” *New York Post*, March 20, 2023, <https://nypost.com/2023/03/20/republicans-celebrate-as-biden-signs-resolution-to-reverse-dc-crime-bill/>.
- <sup>16</sup> Washington D.C. Council, Act 25-175, “Prioritizing Public Safety Emergency Amendment Act of 2023,” July 20, 2023, <https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/acts/25-175>.

- 
- <sup>17</sup> “Councilmember Pinto announces Secure DC Plan to address public safety,” brookepintodc.com, September 18, 2023, <https://www.brookepintodc.com/newsroom/councilmember-pinto-secure-dc-plan>.
- <sup>18</sup> Daniel S. Nagin, “Deterrence in the Twenty-First Century,” *Crime and Justice in America 1975-2025: A Review of Research*, vol. 42: (2003).
- <sup>19</sup> *The Ungers, 5 years and counting: A case study in safely reducing long prison terms and saving taxpayers’ dollars* (Washington D.C.: Justice Policy Institute, 2018), [https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/The\\_Ungers\\_5\\_Years\\_and\\_Counting.pdf](https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/The_Ungers_5_Years_and_Counting.pdf).
- <sup>20</sup> “Bleeding Out: Strategies to reduce violence” (presentation, Council on Criminal Justice, July 31, 2019), <https://counciloncj.org/bleeding-out-strategies-to-reduce-violence/>.
- <sup>21</sup> Thomas Abt, “Stopping the Bleeding: Bold Plans to Prevent Urban Violence,” Brennan Center for Justice, April 27, 2020, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/stopping-bleeding-bold-plans-prevent-urban-violence>.
- <sup>22</sup> Michael Woody, Tyrone Walker and Joel Caston, *DC’s Young Men Emerging Unit: A Story of Reform and Lessons Learned From the Front Lines* (Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute, 2020), [https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Young\\_Men\\_Emerging\\_Unit\\_2020.pdf](https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Young_Men_Emerging_Unit_2020.pdf); see also *Emerging Adults in Washington DC’s Justice System* (Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute, 2020), [https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/DC\\_Emerging\\_Adult\\_Brief\\_2020.pdf](https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/DC_Emerging_Adult_Brief_2020.pdf).
- <sup>23</sup> “The NEAR Act,” Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie, <https://kenyanmcduffiedc.com/nearact/>.
- <sup>24</sup> “Violence Intervention Initiative,” DC Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, <https://onse.dc.gov/service/violence-intervention-initiative>.
- <sup>25</sup> “NEAR Act Violence Prevention and Interruption Efforts: Opportunities to Strengthen New Program Models,” Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, June 7, 2022, <https://dcauditor.org/report/near-act-violence-prevention-and-interruption-efforts-opportunities-to-strengthen-new-program-models/>.
- <sup>26</sup> “NEAR Act Violence Prevention and Interruption Efforts: Opportunities to Strengthen New Program Models.”
- <sup>27</sup> “NEAR Act Police Reforms Advance Procedural Justice but Data Initiatives Stall,” Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, September 14, 2023, <https://dcauditor.org/report/near-act-police-reforms-advance-procedural-justice-but-data-initiatives-stall/>.
- <sup>28</sup> “ACLU-DC v. District of Columbia – Challenging D.C. Police’s Failure to Release Stop-and-Frisk Data,” ACLU District of Columbia, <https://www.acludc.org/en/cases/aclu-dc-v-district-columbia-challenging-dc-polices-failure-release-stop-and-frisk-data>; see also discussion in Collen Grablick, “A D.C. Task Force Meant To Reduce Murders Fell Apart. Some Say It’s A Part Of A Broader Pattern,” dcist.com March 22, 2023, <https://dcist.com/story/23/03/22/dc-homicide-task-force-dissolves/>.
- <sup>29</sup> “NEAR Act Police Reforms Advance Procedural Justice but Data Initiatives Stall.”
- <sup>30</sup> *Washington, DC Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan*.
- <sup>31</sup> “Mayor Bowser Announces Initiative Pairing Approximately 200 Residents Most At Risk of Gun Violence to Interagency Support Teams Led by Cabinet Members,” Executive Office of the Mayor, April 18, 2022, <https://mayor.dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-announces-initiative-pairing-approximately-200-residents-most-risk-gun-violence>.
- <sup>32</sup> NICJR staff, interview with authors, October 17, 2023.
- <sup>33</sup> Debbie Truong, “Students In D.C. Jail Sue City For Failing To Provide Instruction During The Pandemic,” NPR, April 14, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/local/305/2021/04/14/987170358/students-in-d-c-jail-sue-city-for-failing-to-provide-instruction-during-the-pandemic>.
- <sup>34</sup> “A Safer, Stronger DC,” Together DC, <https://together.dc.gov/saferstronger#:~:text=On%20May%2015%2C%202023%2C%20Mayor,Stronger%20Amendment%20Act%20of%202023.>
- <sup>35</sup> Mayor Muriel Bowser, “Districtwide Review of Violence Reduction Programs,” [https://together.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/together/page\\_content/attachments/2023-061-Districtwide-Review-of-Violence-Reduction-Programs.pdf](https://together.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/together/page_content/attachments/2023-061-Districtwide-Review-of-Violence-Reduction-Programs.pdf).
- <sup>36</sup> “Judiciary Committee Update – Passage of Emergency Public Safety Legislation,” brookepintodc.com, July 19, 2023, <https://www.brookepintodc.com/newsroom/judiciary-committee-update-emergency-public-safety#:~:text=The%20three%20bills%20I%20introduced,pressing%20gaps%20in%20our%20legal.>
- <sup>37</sup> “Councilmember Pinto announces Secure DC Plan to address public safety.”

<sup>38</sup> “Mayor Bowser Announces New Legislation to Support Safe and Effective Policing,” Executive Office of the Mayor, October 23, 2023, <https://mayor.dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-announces-new-legislation-support-safe-and-effective-policing>.

<sup>39</sup> “Say No to Abuse of Power in D.C. – Stop the ACTIVE Act,” ACLU District of Columbia, <https://www.acludc.org/en/say-no-abuse-power-dc-stop-active-act>.

<sup>40</sup> “Mayor Bowser Issues Public Emergency to Give District New Tools for Responding to Opioid Crisis and Increase in Youth Violence,” Executive Office of the Mayor, November 13, 2023, <https://mayor.dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-issues-public-emergency-give-district-new-tools-responding-opioid-crisis-and>.

<sup>41</sup> Alex Koma, “‘A Disaster On Top of an Already Existing Disaster’: Bowser Is Winding Down Oversight of D.C.’s Juvenile Justice System, Just as Conditions for Kids Deteriorate,” *Washington City Paper*, November 13, 2023, <https://washingtoncitypaper.com/article/637055/bowser-winds-down-oversight-of-department-of-youth-rehabilitation-services-as-conditions-for-kids-deteriorate/>.

<sup>42</sup> “Amended Youth Rehabilitation Act (YRA) of 2018 Emerging Adult Strategic Plan 2020-2025” (Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute, 2020), [https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/DC\\_YRA\\_Strategic-Plan\\_2020-2025.pdf](https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/DC_YRA_Strategic-Plan_2020-2025.pdf); “District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Act Update” (Washington, DC: District of Columbia Corrections Information Council, 2022).

<sup>43</sup> Washington D.C. Council, Law 24-345, “Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act of 2022,” <https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/laws/24-345>.

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., Ashraf Khalil, “Violent crime is rising in the nation’s capital. DC seeks solutions as Congress keeps close watch,” Associated Press, July 29, 2023,

<https://apnews.com/article/washington-violent-crime-congress-police-republicans-55983798394a8461d0f2d1a71cbe8ed2>; see Peter Hermann and Jasmine Hilton, “Surge of homicides in D.C. leaves 13 dead in August’s first 5 days,” *Washington Post*, August 6, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/08/06/dc-homicides-violent-crime/>; see Jenny Gathwright, “‘We Live In A Very Wicked Time’: Residents, Lawmakers Exasperated By D.C.’s Violent Summer”, *DCist*, August 8, 2023, <https://dcist.com/story/23/08/08/dc-gun-violence-summer-august-homicides/>; see Kate Davison and Ida Domingo, “‘We are clearly in a war zone’: DC Councilman Trayon White calls for National Guard intervention amid rising crime rates,” *WJLA-TV*, August 8, 2023, <https://wjla.com/news/local/dc-crime-rates-homicides-murder-us-national-guard-urgent-call-help-councilman-trayon-white-district-councilmember-neighborhoods-youth-gun-violence-carjackings-shootings-shot-mpd-pamela-smith-bowser-bill>; see Beatrice Peterson, “Facing ‘emergency,’ DC prepares to pass new crime bill,” *ABC News*, July 10, 2023,

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/facing-emergency-dc-prepares-pass-new-crime-bill/story?id=101020926>

<sup>45</sup> See, e.g. *Washington, DC Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan*; “NEAR Act Violence Prevention and Interruption Efforts: Opportunities to Strengthen New Program Models”; District of Columbia Housing Authority Organizational and Operational Assessment Consolidated Reports, 2021.

<sup>46</sup> *Washington, DC Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan*.

<sup>47</sup> “Councilmember Robert White Announces Crime Response Bill.” Office of Councilmember Robert White, October 5, 2023. <https://www.robertwhiteatlarge.com/councilmember-robert-white-announces-crime-response-bill/>.

<sup>48</sup> “Councilmember Pinto announces Secure DC Plan to address public safety.”.

<sup>49</sup> *Washington, DC Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan*.

<sup>50</sup> *Washington, DC Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan*.

<sup>51</sup> *Washington, DC Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan*.

<sup>52</sup> “Amended Youth Rehabilitation Act (YRA) of 2018 and Emerging Adult Strategic Plan.”

<sup>53</sup> “Amended Youth Rehabilitation Act (YRA) of 2018 and Emerging Adult Strategic Plan.”

<sup>54</sup> See e.g., “Maximizing Impact of Direct Cash Transfers to Young People: Navigating interactions with tax obligations, public benefits, and other financial assistance,” Chapin Hall at The University of Chicago, accessed November 14, 2023, [https://www.chapinhall.org/project/direct-cash-transfers-policy-toolkit/?gclid=Cj0KCCQiAuqKqBhDxARIsAFZELmJ8R\\_13TEABgIHGithDLwH08XVh2p2kJ6Yw-bDhCPQbEXAhYSDhQaArrJEALw\\_wcB](https://www.chapinhall.org/project/direct-cash-transfers-policy-toolkit/?gclid=Cj0KCCQiAuqKqBhDxARIsAFZELmJ8R_13TEABgIHGithDLwH08XVh2p2kJ6Yw-bDhCPQbEXAhYSDhQaArrJEALw_wcB).

<sup>55</sup> *Washington, DC Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan*.

<sup>56</sup> *Washington, DC Gun Violence Reduction Strategic Plan*.

<sup>57</sup> “Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act of 2022.”

---

<sup>58</sup> “Decentering Police To Improve Public Safety: A Report of The DC Police Reform Commission,” District of Columbia Police Reform Commission, April 1, 2021, <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Police-Reform-Commission-Full-Report.pdf>.

<sup>59</sup> Andrea M. Gardner and Kevin M. Scott, Ph.D., “Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, 2018 - Statistical Tables,” U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Bureau of Justice Statistics, October 2022, <https://bjs.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh236/files/media/document/cs1lea18st.pdf>.

<sup>60</sup> “People of Promise,” Office of Neighborhood and Safety Engagement, accessed November 14, 2023, <https://onse.dc.gov/service/people-promise>.

<sup>61</sup> “Violence Intervention Initiative,” Office of Neighborhood and Safety Engagement, accessed November 14, 2023. <https://onse.dc.gov/service/violence-intervention-initiative>.

<sup>62</sup> Woody, Walker and Caston, *DC’s Young Men Emerging Unit*.

<sup>63</sup> “Cure the Streets: OAG’s Violence Interruption Program,” Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia, accessed November 14, 2022, <https://oag.dc.gov/public-safety/cure-streets-oags-violence-interruption-program>.

<sup>64</sup> “Pathways Program,” Office of Neighborhood and Safety Engagement, accessed November 14, 2023, <https://onse.dc.gov/service/pathways-program>.

<sup>65</sup> “Credible Messenger Initiative,” Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, accessed November 14, 2023, <https://dyrs.dc.gov/page/credible-messenger-initiative>.

<sup>66</sup> “Community Response Team,” Office of Neighborhood and Safety Engagement, accessed November 14, 2023, <https://onse.dc.gov/service/community-response-team-onse>.