



Third Annual Criminal Justice Summit

Introduction

The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) convened its Third Annual Criminal Justice Summit on March 27, 2019 at One Judiciary Square, Old Council Chambers, Washington, DC. The program theme was “Paving the Way to the New Normal: Violence Prevention Strategies That Work.” The Summit explored different dimensions of violence, particularly escalating gun-related homicides across the District.



Mannone Butler, CJCC Executive Director, welcomed an audience of 200 persons that included CJCC partners, criminal justice professionals, and community stakeholders. Director Butler stressed that the purpose of the program was to continue discussions regarding issues and solutions related to violence prevention. She emphasized the importance of communities and organizations working collectively to develop

system-wide approaches and strategies to slow the surge in gun violence, particularly homicides. Director Butler noted that it is vital for individuals, communities, and stakeholders across the District to continue to build relationships and networks to establish a “new normal” of thinking about and responding to violence. Further, she noted that although guns are not manufactured in the District, guns can be easily acquired illegally and are being used in the commission of crimes across the city. Most importantly, she commented that the upward trajectory in violence must be stopped, and all interested and affected parties must continue to collaborate and remain vigilant in their efforts to create new attitudes and responses to violence.

Audience Survey Results



The audience participated in a survey to obtain demographic and baseline data related to their familiarity with the program theme and gun violence statistics. The survey revealed the following:

- 66% of Summit attendees worked for a CJCC partner agency
- 20% of the attendees represented a non-governmental organization (NGO)
- 14% of Summit participants were private citizens
- 72% of respondents believed fatal shootings increased compared to last year at the same time, confirming existing data
- 83% of respondents answered that the total number of shootings compared to the same time last year increased slightly or greatly increased
- 27% of respondents believed that the highest rate of gun-related homicides occurred in Ward 7, and 58% answered Ward 8
- 70% indicated they either directly or indirectly knew or were familiar with someone victimized by gun violence or a gun-related death
- 71% of respondents answered that both adults and juveniles were responsible for committing gun-related violence. 33% answered juveniles and 17% answered adults
- 61% of attendees indicated they believe Virginia is the greatest source for producing illegal guns used in the commission of a crime in DC, and 13% responded Texas

At the end of the survey, Director Butler introduced D.C. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton to provide an overview of recent congressional criminal justice initiatives important to the District and its residents.

Congressional Remarks

Congresswoman Norton emphasized the importance of DC becoming the 51st state, which would eliminate congressional interference in District affairs. She discussed gun-related legislation proceeding through the 116th session of Congress, notably, concealed carry provisions enacted in other jurisdictions

and efforts to require the District to grant reciprocity for out-of-state weapons licenses. Congresswoman Norton expressed frustration with the fact that extensive research efforts are dedicated to exploring the causes of gun violence, but, she asserted, there are no plausible explanations for the alarming rise in gun crimes and the surge in homicides.

Congresswoman Norton cited the passage of the First Step Act, P.L. 115-391 in the beginning of the current session of Congress. The bipartisan legislation represents major reform related to reducing recidivism. The legislation is important because it directs the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to address the needs of incarcerated DC residents at facilities across the country. Most notably, the provisions include ensuring that inmates are assigned to facilities that are within 500 miles of the District. The legislation provides for obstetric services for female inmates, in addition to substance abuse treatment. Additional elements of the bill required the calculation of early release dates for inmates for “good time” behavior, and crediting inmate progress toward educational achievement and personal skills development. Congresswoman Norton has requested the BOP to identify every regulation and policy within the legislation that excludes District residents. She hailed the legislation as a successful bipartisan initiative.



Finally, Congresswoman Norton mentioned her legislative efforts to develop grant funding to support the creation of task forces designed to update police practices through collaboration between community organizations and the police.

Director Butler thanked Congresswoman Norton for her remarks and her ongoing commitment to serving residents of the District.

Prior to convening the first panel discussion, Director Butler called for a moment of silence and conveyed sad and sobering news that the 38th victim of a homicide, Eric Weaver, Jr. had been killed earlier that morning. Both Eric Jr. and his father, Eric Weaver, Sr., were previously incarcerated. They reunited in 2017 and were committed to supporting the needs of returning citizens. The death of Eric Jr. shocked members of the criminal justice community who are familiar with the family’s history, struggles and successes in reentering society.

Panel Discussion – Learning from Firsthand Lived Experience: Harm, Redemption, Pain & Healing



The goal of the panel discussion was to explore the consequences of harm caused by gun violence to victims and perpetrators, and to identify systemic, proactive, and programmatic initiatives that promote individual recovery, redemption and community healing. Each of the panelists offered unique perspectives based on personal experience as a perpetrator or victim striving to realize personal redemption.

Tony Lewis Jr., High-Risk Coordinator, Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA), moderated the panel comprised of Robert Butler, Community Intervention Specialist, Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE); Luis Cardona, Administrator, Positive Youth Development, Montgomery County, Maryland; and Gregory Jackson, ONSE, Community Engagement and Communications.

Victimization, Trauma, and Perpetration of Violence

Mr. Lewis began the discussion by asking panelists to describe the differences between victims and perpetrators of violent crime. Panelists offered that the terms are intertwined, because the person who causes harm (murder, shooting, etc.), may have previously been victimized due to several social factors, including lack of education, emotional/physical abuse, poverty, domestic violence, etc. Further, hurt victims often hurt others, and perpetrators of violence subject themselves to harm and victimization because of their criminal justice system involvement, incarceration, potential street retaliation, and social alienation. Additionally, panelists stressed that often victims are also survivors because they exhibit resilience and courage despite trauma they experienced. Finally, system-involved young boys, largely black and brown, can be considered victims because they experience economic, educational, emotional, and social deprivation, and those realities contribute to their dysfunctional behavior.

Culture of Violence

The panel discussion explored the culture associated with violence and provided the following insights:

- Some residents live in constant fear when violent perpetrators continue to live in the community. Often, they do not report them to the authorities due to fear of retribution.
- Neighborhood residents who experience the trauma of losing a family member or friend through gun violence are often reminded of the experience every time they pass the site of a murder, which is oftentimes in their communities.
- Many trauma victims are forced to remain in their communities because they cannot afford to relocate.
- Some victims of violence revisit their trauma daily because they must attend to their physical wounds long after the event.
- Family members attempt to provide emotional and therapeutic support to surviving victims; however, they have experienced trauma as well and require similar support.
- Trauma is inter-generational across families. Additionally, family members bear the weight of grieving and surviving long after the initial trauma, especially for homicides.



Incarceration as a Contributing Factor in Violent Behavior

Mr. Lewis asked the panelists to address if or how high rates of incarceration among males in communities experiencing violence plays a role in violence across the city. Their responses included the following: young males suffer from a lack of positive male role-models and emotional support; extended family members become the caretakers of the children of incarcerated relatives; and criminality and incarceration become all too familiar realities (i.e., the norm) across vulnerable communities.

Mental Health Considerations

The panelists discussed stigmas attached to mental health, criminality, and coping with trauma. Key points addressed were: persons affected by violence require effective coping skills, they are reluctant to share their experiences with people with whom they are unfamiliar, and vulnerable communities (black, brown, poor, and uneducated) need and can benefit from trauma-informed counseling.

The Source of Guns and Violence

Panelists commented that the availability of illegal guns contributes to violence, and violence occurs because it is normalized across different communities. Additionally, some residents in communities susceptible to violence resort to carrying and using illegal weapon for self-protection; whereas there is no such need in more affluent and better police patrolled neighborhoods. Panelists expressed the opinion that gentrification contributes to violence because residents are being displaced and move to new and unfamiliar neighborhoods that pose new threats to their safety.

Moving Forward/Tangible Efforts

Panelists proposed the following recommendations for addressing gun violence in the District:

- creating a community and social movement to change attitudes and behavior,
- meeting community members where they are by understanding their realities and challenges,
- investing in trauma care services,
- investing in and leveraging strategies that work in changing community realities block-by-block,
- investing in youth programs, and
- supporting uplifting transformative programs such as the ONSE Pathways program for ex-offenders to assist in crisis and community intervention efforts.

Audience members offered additional solutions, including:

- Expand programs for girls, and
- Provide positive environments for traumatized youth.

Paul A. Quander, Jr. Leadership and Fair Administration of Justice Award Ceremony

Director Butler introduced Leslie Cooper, Director, PSA, and CJCC Co-Chair to preside over the Paul A. Quander, Jr. Leadership and Fair Administration of Justice Luncheon Award Ceremony and present the honoree.

Director Cooper acknowledged Paul Quander, Jr. for his public service in different capacities, including former Assistant U.S. Attorney, Deputy Director of the Department of Corrections, previous CJCC Executive Director, first presidential appointee to oversee the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA), and Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice. Director Cooper also cited Mr. Quander's unwavering ideals,



which encouraged institutional accountability, interagency coordination, responsiveness, innovation, and commitment to reducing District residents' exposure to the criminal justice system.

She proceeded to recognize the awardee, Cedric Hendricks, Associate Director, Office of Legislative, Intergovernmental and Public Affairs, CSOSA, and acknowledged Paul Quander's wife, Charlene Quander and daughter, Katherine Forde who were in attendance.



Mr. Hendricks was unable to attend the summit, but he provided videotaped remarks, and expressed his gratitude as a recipient, and focused his comments on the enduring legacy of Paul A. Quander, Jr.

Mr. Hendricks stated he shared Mr. Quander’s optimism regarding the capacity of the criminal justice system to positively transform the lives of persons who come in contact with the system. Mr. Hendricks praised CJCC for its institutional efforts to promote interagency collaboration since 2001 when he embarked on his career with CSOSA. He commented that the honor of being selected as the 2019 recipient is a testament to the lessons learned from Paul Quander, Jr. regarding the importance of teamwork, coordination and collaboration. Finally, he offered that previous professional responsibilities as a probation officer, social worker, congressional counsel, and senior executive at CSOSA, prepared him to undertake the challenge of leadership exemplified by Paul Quander, Jr.



*Cedric Hendricks, Paul A. Quander, Jr.
Leadership and Fair Administration of Justice
Award Recipient*

The luncheon award program concluded with James Berry, Deputy Director, CSOSA, accepting the award on behalf of Mr. Hendricks.



2019 Paul A. Quander, Jr. Honoree Recipient Photo with Quander Family Members and CJCC Officials (Left to right: Katherine Quander Forde, daughter; James Berry, Deputy Director, CSOSA, accepting for Cedric Hendricks, Charlene Quander, wife; Leslie Cooper, CJCC Co-Chair; and Mannone Butler, CJCC, Executive Director.)

Pathways to Community Peace: Effective & Holistic Approaches

Dana Mc Daniel, Program Manager, Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) moderated an afternoon discussion designed to explore targeted and solution-oriented initiatives conducted by trained professionals (medical, criminal justice, and previously system-involved). The panel's objective was to foster anti-violence strategies, i.e. "cool-down and goodwill" violence reduction efforts, and identify services and protocols that support the needs of traumatized victims and survivors of violence.



The panel included: Ameen Beale, Office of Attorney General (OAG), Michelle Garcia, Director, Office of Victims Services and Justice Grants (OVSJG), Dr. Erin Hall, Program Director, Community Violence Interruption Program, Department of Trauma Administration, Medstar Washington Hospital Center; and Del McFadden, Director, Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE).



Pathways to Community Peace: Effective & Holistic Approaches Panel (Left to right: Del McFadden, Dr. Erin Hall, Michelle Garcia, and Ameen Beale.)

Ms. McDaniel started the discussion by asking generally what can be done to work across institutional silos to combat problems associated with gun violence. She offered that achieving community peace is a common theme that drives the work of everyone sitting on the panel and in attendance at the Summit, despite their different roles and functions. Ms. McDaniel also asked what contributes to community unrest, and whether the panelists feel that community peace is attainable.

Panelists offered that unrest occurs when there is anxiety and frustration related to the lack of opportunities with respect to housing, employment, job training, etc. Additionally, community peace is attainable when there are cross-sector partnerships among government, nonprofits, and the community. In addition, there must be community buy-in for any type of peace to occur. Key points stressed were:

- Unrest is an inter-generational issue and families accustomed to consistent turmoil must be exposed to situational examples of peace that are normal to other communities
- Some communities have never experienced peace, so unrest is an ongoing reality for residents
- Pathways to peace can be realized, but people must be given the tools to help them achieve it

Proceeding on the premise that communities working together can achieve peace and address trauma, Ms. McDaniel asked what success would look like, and respondents answered: a corresponding reduction in violence would occur, children would experience harm and trauma-free lives, and mortality rates would decline. Additionally, community members would experience increased well-being, greater access to resources and tools that can heal and empower community residents, and equitable access to essential services, including: medical services, nutritional counseling, trauma-informed care, and a reduction in retaliatory acts.

Panelists proposed several violence prevention strategies including, continuing to support existing efforts, such as the ONSE Pathways Program to rehabilitate and empower previously system-involved persons; credible messengers and violence interruption specialists; hospital-based violence intervention approaches, such as those in place at Washington Hospital Center, Georgetown University Hospital, Howard University Hospital, and University of Maryland Prince George's Hospital Center. Additional approaches for preventing violence included:

- Incorporating community engagement in the delivery of trauma services
- Employing Cure Violence approaches to detect and prevent violence
- Acknowledging that violence prevention and intervention are equally important
- Understanding that trauma is always prevalent in three places, crime scenes, hospitals, and funerals
- Appreciating that crime scenes, hospitals, and funerals are the primary places people experience trauma

Generally, panelists agreed that it is important to strengthen vulnerable communities by supporting people where they live, providing community outreach services, and collecting data and using it to inform decision-making. Panelists also proposed using the following to engage community members and generate community support: employing social media, generating a community-driven social movement, and including more women in the dialogue and development of solutions.

Implementing Strategies Rooted in Evidence and Research to Reduce Gun Violence

Dr. Roger Mitchell, Jr., Chief Medical Examiner, District of Columbia, moderated the panel. He commenced the discussion by focusing on social determinants of health and explaining that when discussing issues related to violence and research, it is important to differentiate between issues associated with equity versus equality. Dr. Mitchell emphasized that in the not too distant past, violence was not discussed as a public health issue. He stressed that research can be made available to policymakers to make policy and influence change. Dr. Mitchell offered that the panel discussion would:

- Explore what is happening
- Delve into the research to determine what needs to happen

- Identify what communities need to do prevent and reduce gun violence
- Explore what individuals need to do to reduce gun violence

Dr. Mitchell introduced, Dr. Jeffery Butts, Director, Research & Evaluation Center, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and Dr. Mallory Williams, Howard University, Chief, Division of Trauma & Critical Care, Director, Surgical Intensive Care Unit.



Dr. Butts' presentation emphasized that a successful violence reduction program should operate on multiple fronts and focus on the individual and community. He proposed that law enforcement work in tandem with violence reduction programs, and he stressed that Cure Violence initiatives work, but he acknowledged that in some communities, police departments do not embrace community involvement in violence reduction efforts. Dr. Butts stressed the importance of gathering accurate data, especially for the high-risk demographic of 18-30 year-old males.

Dr. Butts emphasized, too often community organizations know more about violent activity than the police do because people trust them, and it is important to focus on neighborhood and social norms, public messaging, and public events. Further, he mentioned that the lack of funding for community-based organizations hinders their ability to employ alternative strategies that work.

Regarding research, Dr. Butts commented on the importance of collecting data where shootings occur, in addition to evaluating hospital data trends and analyses. He also stressed the importance of conducting interviews in local neighborhoods, and analyzing the data to assess the implications for developing and employing effective policies.

Finally, Dr. Butts stressed that our culture glorifies violence, and viewing entertainment includes violent imagery that perpetuates violence, which ultimately results in corresponding desensitization to the violence occurring in our communities.

Dr. Williams offered that the level of gun violence occurring in the country can be described as American carnage. He stated that there are an estimated 393 million guns in America and investing in guns is very profitable. He offered that conversations related to gun violence do not focus on gun manufacturers and their responsibility for contributing to the devastation that is occurring. Dr. Williams expressed concerns that although the District has very strict gun ownership laws, and the lowest level of ownership in the

nation per capita, the homicide rate continues to rise. He stressed that prevention must be the cornerstone of anti-violence strategies, because the lethality of weapons being used is leading to more deaths, a reality compounded by the increased magazine capacity in the weapons of choice, semiautomatic pistols.

Dr. Williams expressed concern that gun safety education does not exist in disadvantaged communities, and that within those communities, illegal weapons are used for protection, and quite frequently for retaliation.

Regarding other realities associated with gun violence, he stressed that it is vital to develop school curricula that assists students in learning about and coping with the realities of guns and violence. Further, he offered the perspective that inner-city youth are targeted and traumatized by law enforcement, and that African-Americans residing in urban communities are over-policed. Finally, Dr. Williams emphasized that structural violence is occurring and communities are not banding together to take care of each other.

Roadmap to Tracking and Stopping the Flow of Illegal Guns



Panelists, left to right, Jennifer Smith Ph.D, Robert Contee, Matthew DeSarno, Alessio Evangelista, Ashan Benedict, and Kevin Donahue

Kevin Donahue, Deputy Mayor, Public Safety and Justice moderated the final panel comprised of Ashan Benedict, Special Agent-in-Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); Alessio Evangelista, Principal Assistant U.S. Attorney (DC); Matthew J. DeSarno, Special Agent-in-Charge, Criminal/Cyber Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); Robert Contee, Assistant Chief, Investigative Services Bureau, Metropolitan Police Department (MPD); and Jennifer Smith, PhD, Director, Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS), DC.

Deputy Mayor Donahue commenced the discussion by asking each panelist to describe the role of their agencies with respect to combating gun violence in the District and their observations as to why the number of homicides has increased.

Dr. Smith explained that DFS collects evidence to support MPD 24/7, including 70 individuals who supported the collection of forensic evidence at over 6,000 crime scenes in 2018. The department collects weapons and shell casings, in addition to performing ballistics analyses to determine the make, model, and serial numbers of weapons used in the commission of a crime. DFS also performs DNA testing and fingerprint analysis and has noticed an increase in the number of casings left at scenes.

MPD offered that the Gun Recovery Unit, alone, recovered 400 illegal firearms in 2018 and the sheer volume of rounds fired stands out, due primarily to semiautomatic pistol magazine capacity. A notable point made was that during previous eras, only “career criminals” who were “in the game” used guns to commit homicides. Now, however, shootings occur over petty disputes that two people cannot resolve, and the resulting violence has nothing to do with related criminal activity, such as drugs.

Agent DeSarno stated that the FBI regularly works with MPD to reduce gun crimes and apprehend violent offenders. He also shared that the FBI has observed year-to-year increases in homicides. Agent DeSarno stressed that DC has a higher homicide clearance rate compared to other places like Chicago; primarily because DC does not experience the pervasive problem of gang activity which is intergenerational in Chicago. Mr. Evangelista shared that when prosecuting gun-related cases, the USAO finds that witnesses and victims are not willing to cooperate out of fear of retaliation, and the USAO is working to change that reality.



Panelists stressed that the people most likely to commit offenses with a firearm are those who have done it before. Agent Benedict highlighted ATF’s efforts to track guns that start out as legal commerce but ultimately cross over to illegal commerce. Additionally, the FBI makes sourcing of firearms a priority and utilizes its investigative science approaches to determine which weapons were used and who is most likely to commit gun offenses.

The Source of Guns

Agent Benedict explained that the ATF employs a national trace system (eTrace) and in 2018, 2,000 guns were recovered in the District, and 1,500 were pistols. Virginia is the number one source state for straw purchases, i.e. a process whereby a Virginia resident buys a gun or guns legally in Virginia, often in high quantities, and sells them illegally to District residents. It becomes a federal offense when those weapons are trafficked over state lines, and the transaction takes place between the District resident and the Virginia resident.

Assistant Chief Contee offered that individuals acquire illegal guns in Virginia parking lots at gun shows where someone sells guns from their vehicle without any background checks or legal paperwork being completed. Agent DeSarno explained that many guns are sold right after the commission of a crime or purchased right before one is committed.

Dr. Smith explained that guns have a resume, i.e. serial number, documentation in the use of a prior crime. She stressed it is essential to ensure the processing of a weapon used in the commission of a crime during

the first 48 hours, in order to effectively perform forensics research; because weapons are recirculated and sold immediately after they are used in a criminal act.

Audience Questions

Deputy Mayor Donahue entertained questions from the audience regarding the source of guns. An audience member asked how many illegal guns are in the District. Assistant Chief Contee and Agent Benedict stated that there is no way to determine the total number of illegal guns in the District; instead, they are able to report only on the number of illegal guns recovered, which averages between 1,900-2,000 annually. As a practical matter, gun purchase information is not shared between states, i.e. Maryland, Virginia, and the District, unless there is an ongoing criminal investigation. Further, individual legal weapons purchases are not shared with law enforcement or judicial officials.

Dr. Smith shared that DFS assesses the serial numbers of guns they receive in evidence to determine whether they were altered in any way, and what kinds of magazines they use. Assistant Chief Contee responded that high-capacity magazines are illegal in the District, but they are often found at crime scenes. Agent Benedict explained that firearms parts are not tracked nationally.

Assistant Chief Contee responded to an audience question regarding which Ward had the highest number of illegal weapons. He stated that Wards 7 and 8 are the source of the highest number of illegal weapons recovered, and the seizures are consistent with the type of lethal weapons being used involving high capacity magazines that fire more rounds in a short span of time and are contributing to the escalating rise in homicides. He also stated that to date, legal gun ownership and concealed carry permit requests have increased. Further, he stated there is no correlation between gun violence and the use of legal weapons, because those weapons are not being used in the commission of crimes.

Regarding case-tracking resources and areas of expertise, Agent Benedict said interstate jurisdiction is ATF's specialty and they track legal purchases that are used in interstate illegal transactions. Additionally, those cases are prosecuted in collaboration with MPD and the U.S. Attorney Office, DC.

Mr. Evangelista indicated that defendants state they are aware of criminal sentences for violating gun possession laws, but those laws do not present a compelling deterrent to their behavior.

When queried regarding whether the ATF makes suggestions to Congress regarding firearms legislation, Agent Benedict explained that his agency educates members of Congress regarding trends associated with gun trafficking, but the agency does not suggest or propose legislation.

Dr. Smith provided the perspective that data can be helpful when examining the origins of weapons, especially "ghost guns", where gun parts are purchased legally to build a gun with no serial numbers. Potentially, that information can be useful to Congress in developing effective legislative responses.

Key Takeaway Strategies

The day's panel discussions proved fruitful in identifying takeaways regarding how to proceed with intervention and prevention efforts. The consensus from the discussion revealed that petty arguments among youth and young adults are resulting in more dangerous conflicts with guns.

Key points raised included inter-generational trauma is highly prevalent, and youth offenders are not afraid of prison, because for many, it is a rite of passage and a norm in their communities. Another key takeaway was that high-risk youth need to be equipped with coping mechanisms (i.e. conflict resolution skills and cognitive thinking strategies) because they have normalized death and violence in their lives. Finally, it is critical to initiate gun safety education, and the District should consider gun amnesty turn-in or buy-back programs.

Closing

Director Butler, commented in closing "We all have the opportunity and responsibility to take action outside of our comfort zones, and our efforts must endure. There are concerted actions underway that must continue, and we must create a social movement that involves all of us." Finally, she thanked everyone in attendance for participating in the Summit and concluded the program.