November 14, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C., 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C., 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chair  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington D.C., 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington D.C., 20515

Dear Chair Leahy, Vice Chair Shelby, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger:

As you work towards finalizing appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, we, the undersigned 70 members of the Invest in Us Coalition representing national, state, and local violence prevention organizations, write to ask you to provide at least $250 million for Community Violence Intervention (CVI) initiatives in your FY 2023 legislation, of which $150 million would fund the Department of Justice’s (DOJ’s) Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) and $100 million would fund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) Community and Youth Violence Prevention Program.

Gun violence rates have soared across the nation since 2020, with cities reporting record numbers of gun homicides in 2021.1 2020 marked a 15 percent increase in gun deaths—with more than 45,000 gun deaths reported by the CDC, the spike largely fueled by gun homicide numbers. Troublingly, provisional data released by the CDC shows that the deadly trend continued, with nearly 49,000 gun deaths reported in 2021. This crisis is particularly devastating for communities of color who are disproportionately impacted by community violence.

In addition to the immeasurable human pain and suffering, this violence also significantly damages the U.S. economy: gun violence costs this country approximately $557 billion every year.2 Evidence clearly shows that lower levels of gun violence mean lower costs, and investing in community violence intervention programs can help reduce gun violence.

Given the elevated and sustained rates of gun violence, it is essential that the federal government take significant action to address this public health crisis. Reversing the trend of increased gun violence will require investment in the types of evidence-informed, community-led strategies that have proven to be effective in cities such as St. Louis, MO and Detroit, MI, which were among the jurisdictions that

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invested robustly in CVI in 2020 and 2021 and saw decreases in gun-related homicides and injuries. The proposed funding would be a targeted, specific investment in America’s most impacted communities that are continuing to suffer from unacceptably high levels of gun violence in the absence of dedicated funding to support community-led violence reduction initiatives. It is crucial for public health and safety that there be ongoing, scaled-up federal investment into CVI programs through annual appropriations to enable the CVI field to sustain and expand life-saving work.

The Invest in Us Coalition strongly believes that robustly funding dedicated CVI programs within both the DOJ and CDC is critical as it would enable the federal government to address community violence as a threat to both public safety and public health. Under your leadership, the Fiscal Year 2022 omnibus appropriations bill established the Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative within the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), creating a dedicated program within the DOJ to support CVI programs. This past September, OJP awarded $100 million in grants administered through CVIPI, using $50 million in funding provided by the FY 2022 omnibus bill as well as $50 million provided by the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (S.2938). While those awards mark a milestone investment in dedicated federal CVI efforts, it is critical that Congress scale up the funding available to sustain and expand the CVI work being done in communities across the nation.

Furthermore, as the United States moves towards public health approaches for violence prevention, it is vitally important that agencies best suited to implement this approach receive dedicated funding for CVI programming. For example, providing funding for the CDC to build upon its 20-plus years of science-based youth violence prevention efforts to establish a collaborative, community driven approach to reduce community violence in cities would enable the agency to expand their work and more effectively aid in preventing violence in communities most impacted by gun violence.

The CVI Initiatives within DOJ and CDC should prioritize funding for cities with high rates and levels of gun violence and within those cities, to community-based violence intervention strategies which are informed by public health models and provide culturally competent, trauma-responsive services to individuals and communities impacted by gun violence. These evidence-informed strategies are proven to reduce gun violence, shift community norms, and improve the outcomes and resiliency of gun violence survivors.

The funding would support the implementation and sustainability of program models such as:

- **Strategic Workforce Programs**
- **Street Outreach Intervention**
- **Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs**
- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**
- **Safe Passage**
- **Group Violence Intervention**
- **Victim and Survivor Services** including: housing support, financial assistance, reentry services, legal assistance, and trauma counseling, among others.

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Expanding the federal investment in CVI initiatives is critical to the lifesaving work being!done in communities through evidence-informed strategies to reduce violence. We respectfully urge you to include dedicated funding for CVI efforts in your FY 2023 appropriations legislation.

Sincerely,

Advance Peace
Advocates for Peace and Urban Unity
Alliance for Gun Responsibility
American Federation of Teachers
Amnesty International
Big Cities Health Coalition
Bloc Work Inc
Brady
CeaseFirePA
Center for Structural Equity
Change the Ref
Chi-Town GVP Summit
Cities United
City of Newark
Community Justice
CT Against Gun Violence
Delaware Coalition Against Gun Violence
Equal Justice USA
Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund
Faith in New York
Franciscan Action Network
Gays Against Guns
Giffords
Grandmothers Against Gun Violence WA
Gun Violence Prevention PAC
GVPAction
Hartford Communities That Care, Inc.
Healing 4 Our Families & Our Nation
Jewish Women International
Kings Against Violence Initiative (KAVI)
LIFE Camp Inc
March for Our Lives
Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence
Melquain Jatelle Anderson Foundation
Memphis Artists for Change
Nashville Peacemakers
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Council of Jewish Women
National PTA
Newtown Action Alliance
New Future Foundation
North Carolinians Against Gun Violence
Not Another Child, Inc
Not My Generation
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