

April 27, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
C/O State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, California 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
C/O State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins
C/O Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom, Speaker Rendon, and Pro Tem Atkins:

We, the undersigned mayors, write to express our deep gratitude for the California Violence Intervention and Prevention grant program (CalVIP). We call on you to increase funding for the program to \$114 million in this year's budget, including an ongoing investment of \$39 million and an emergency, one-time augmentation of \$75 million to meet our state's urgent needs, as well as to increase the maximum award level to \$4.5 million.

As Californian mayors, we know the tragic effects of gun violence firsthand. This past year our cities have confronted dual public health crises as gun violence surges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year was an especially deadly year for California's cities. Los Angeles experienced over 300 homicides for the first time in a decade, a 34% increase in 2020 compared to 2019;¹ Sacramento saw a 26% increase in homicides in 2020 and the highest number of homicides since 2015;² and Fresno's 2020 homicides reached a level not experienced in almost 25 years.³

The increased homicides across the state carry high health care, law enforcement, and criminal justice costs to California taxpayers. Gun violence costs California \$22.6 billion each year, of which \$1.2 billion is paid by taxpayers.⁴ These high dollar amounts do not even begin to capture the toll of the lives lost, the trauma young people carry with them after witnessing a shooting, the fear of becoming a victim of violence, or the long-term impacts on communities grappling with gun violence. These tragic incidents disproportionately affect our Black residents, who are 10 times more likely to die by gun homicide than their

¹Los Angeles Police Department. "December 26th 2020 Compstat Report". Accessed January 3rd, 2021.

² <https://www.kcra.com/article/sac-pd-says-protests-state-capitol-2020-resulted-more-violent-crime/35556843#>

³ <https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/crime/article248126385.html>

⁴Everytown for Gun Safety Research "Everystat; California". Accessed April 1st, 2021.

white neighbors, and Hispanic residents, who are two times more likely to die by gun homicide.⁵ [Everytown research](#) suggests that each individual gun homicide cost the government and taxpayers an estimated \$700,000.

While California is a national leader in gun violence prevention, CalVIP remains severely underfunded. In the most recent grant cycle, eligible applicants sought a total of \$78 million in matching CalVIP grants, but CalVIP was only able to award \$37 million in grants, leaving eligible cities and community organizations without adequate resources. That number understates the true scope of California's needs, particularly because individual applicants are capped from requesting more than \$500,000.

With increased funding, we—and our community partners—will invest more heavily in evidence-informed programs that intentionally work with people at the highest risk of involvement in gun violence. Cities are relying on these programs to respond to this past year's uptick in violence. Increased funding will allow programs to hire additional community intervention workers and expand violence reductions strategies, such as safe passage and street/community outreach. Many of our cities are already utilizing the support of this critical state funding, including:

- CalVIP helps fund the Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD), which is part of a coordinated, citywide strategy to address serious violence. A recent evaluation of 2005–2017 data found that areas served by Los Angeles' GRYD program experienced an 18 percent reduction in violent crime, relative to comparison areas.⁶
- CalVIP helps fund Oakland Ceasefire, the city's primary strategy for addressing serious violence by intervening with the small population of individuals at highest risk of engaging in violent behavior. A 2019 quasi-experimental study of Oakland Ceasefire found that program-participating gangs were associated with a significant 26 percent reduction in quarterly gang-involved shootings compared to untreated gangs.⁷
- From 2016-18, the state provided \$600,000 to fund Stockton Operation Ceasefire, which is focused on reducing gun violence through the Group Violence Intervention Program (GVIP) model. A 2008 quasi-experimental evaluation of another Stockton GVIP, Operation Peacekeeper, found positive impacts: compared to eight similar cities, the strategy was associated with a significant 42 percent reduction in gun homicides. Stockton and Sacramento are two of the most recent recipients of grants from the

⁵Ibid

⁶ P. Jeffrey Brantingham, Tita George, and Denise Herz "The Impact of the City of Los Angeles Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) Comprehensive Strategy on Crime in the City of Los Angeles," *Justice Evaluation Journal* (February 2021): 489-495. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24751979.2021.1887709>

⁷ Anthony A. Braga et al., "Street Gangs, Gun Violence, and Focused Deterrence: Comparing Place-Based and Group-Based Evaluation Methods to Estimate Direct and Spillover Deterrent Effects," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 56, no. 4 (July 1, 2019): 524–62, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427818821716>.

revamped CalVIP program, and are using funding to pursue strategies similar to those in place in Richmond, Oakland, and Los Angeles.

Guns injure, traumatize and take far too many of our residents—much more needs to be done. As mayors, we are committed to evidence-based violence reduction strategies and urge you to support these efforts by increasing CalVIP funding to \$114 million for 2021-22, increasing the annual award cap to \$4.5 million, and providing an ongoing investment of \$39 million in future budgets.

Sincerely,

Eric Garcetti
Mayor of Los Angeles, CA

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Mayor of Alameda, CA

Lamar A. Thrope
Mayor of Antioch, CA

Jesse Arreguin
Mayor of Berkeley, CA

Aja L. Brown
Mayor of Compton, CA

Bryan Osorio
Mayor of Delano, CA

Catherine Blakespear
Mayor of Encinitas, CA

Barbara Halliday
Mayor of Hayward, CA

Robert Garcia
Mayor of Long Beach, CA

Libby Schaff
Mayor of Oakland, CA

Tom Butt
Mayor of Richmond, CA

Darrell Steinberg
Mayor of Sacramento, CA

Todd Gloria
Mayor of San Diego, CA

London Breed
Mayor of San Francisco, CA

Sam Liccardo
Mayor of San Jose, CA

Lesia Heebner
Mayor of Solana Beach, CA

Patrick J Furey
Mayor of Torrance, CA

Robert H. McConnell
Mayor of Vallejo, CA