

TESTIMONY OUTLINE
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Attorney General's Policy Council on Violence Prevention

- In May 1994, the California Attorney General appointed a Policy Council on Violence Prevention and charged the Council with “studying violence in California and recommending policies and strategies for reversing the pervasive culture of violence in our society.” The Council was a diverse, multidisciplinary group representing criminal justice, health, education, business, family violence, parents, youth-serving organizations, media, research, religious and community-action groups and state agencies.
- The Council determined that violent behavior is rooted in the multiple contexts of individual, family and community/social conditions that can converge to increase the risk for violence.
- This diverse Council identified a common ground conceptual framework and ten policy initiatives that charted a course to violence prevention:
 - Increase the constructive use of the media to deglamorize violence and promote non-violent social norms. (Media Initiative)
 - Reduce deaths and injuries from firearms. (Firearm Initiative)
 - Reduce violence associated with alcohol. (Alcohol Initiative)
 - Strengthen communities and schools by expanding local ownership and control. (Community Initiative)
 - Support families, recognizing them as the basic institution for developing and nurturing children. (Family Initiative)
 - Foster and support violence-free relationships. (Relationships Initiative)
 - Ensure the development of healthy and responsible youth. (Youth Initiative)
 - Recognize that all people matter, fostering a respect for diversity. (Respect for Diversity Initiative)
 - Advance personal and social responsibility. (Responsibility Initiative)
 - Support violence prevention research and evaluation based on the public health model. (Research Initiative)
- Each of the above mentioned initiatives is supported with specific recommendations for action that reflect the Council's emphasis on prevention, community involvement and collaboration. There were a total of 102 recommendations created.
- In April 1997, 17 of the 26 Council members reconvened to review how far California has

come in adopting the recommendations made in their final report, *Preventing Violence...A Vision of Hope*. In addition to the recommendations, the Council members also discussed violence prevention issues with the Attorney General, reviewed prevention products and provided input on the creation of the Attorney General's Youth Council in Violence Prevention.

Attorney General's Youth Council on Violence Prevention

- In October 1997, in an effort to implement the recommendations under the Policy Council's Youth Initiative, the Attorney General created the Attorney General's Youth Council on Violence Prevention. Ten teams, consisting of one youth and his or her adult mentor, were chosen through a competitive process. The youth chosen were very diverse—ranging from ex-gang members to honor students.
- The Youth Council was asked to utilize the work produced by the Policy Council and the members' own experience to develop policies and strategies that:
 - Include youth's views and ideas in state and local violence prevention efforts;
 - Identify incentives for youth leadership and participation in violence prevention efforts;
 - Encourage state and community leaders to give youth a meaningful voice in violence prevention efforts and
 - Assist state and local leaders in the planning and implementation of collaborative violence prevention efforts.
- The Youth Council listened to testimony from youths and adults involved in violence prevention activities throughout the state to find out about strategies that work. Council members also developed a community survey tool and met with business, government, school, neighborhood, church and youth leaders in their communities to talk about strategies to prevent violence.
- Utilizing the information from dozens of California violence prevention practitioners, community leaders, and their life experiences, the Youth Council collectively established 16 recommendations to help prevent youth violence and reverse our pervasive "culture of violence."
- The recommendations consisted of: gangs, cultural diversity, teen dating relationship violence, violence in the media, faith in action, youth membership on government boards, alcohol and other drugs on school campuses, peer courts, youth master plans, balanced and restorative justice, public and community service, state coordination of youth resources, Megan's Law CD-ROM and educating youth about firearm laws.

- The recommendations were put into a full-color report accompanied by an interactive, reality-based CD-ROM. Both were distributed to middle schools, high schools and law enforcement agencies across the state.

Attorney General Bill Lockyer’s crime prevention priorities include: School safety; promoting partnerships and efficient statewide collaboration among law enforcement, social services and health care providers and education; a focus on early childhood development; early intervention to help at-risk children; after-school programs; and “a call to action” for youth to participate in public service programs and work with local communities on crime prevention efforts; targeting scarce resources where they will have the most effect.

School/Law Enforcement Partnership Program (S/LEP Program)

- Since 1983, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Attorney General have unified their efforts and resources through the School/Law Enforcement Partnership to promote programs that enhance the school learning environment, reduce school and community youth crime and ensure the safety of students.
- These programs emphasize conflict resolution and youth mediation; school-community partnerships, especially between law enforcement and schools; build youth resiliency; drug and alcohol abuse prevention; truancy prevention and gang violence reduction. The Partnership’s work results in locally-developed strategic approaches for safer schools and communities.
- Language creating the S/LEP Program is found in *Education Code* section 32260 et seq. Pursuant to the legislation, the Partnership is managed jointly by the California Department of Education’s Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office and the Attorney General’s Crime and Violence Prevention Center.
- The purpose of the S/LEP Program is to encourage schools and law enforcement agencies to develop and implement interagency partnerships, programs, strategies and activities that improve school attendance, encourage good citizenship and promote safe schools.
- To achieve these goals, the Partnership established:
 - A statewide cadre of professionals and technical assistance facilitators from education, law enforcement and other youth-serving agencies.
 - Conferences and regional trainings highlighting current safe school issues.
 - Grant programs to provide schools and their law enforcement partners with resources to implement safe school programs and strategies.
 - Safe School Plan Implementation Grant Program (\$500,000). This annual program provides \$5,000 grants to 94 schools so that they may implement a portion of their comprehensive safe school plan. Grants are awarded via an annual competitive process taking into account demonstrated need as well as criteria enumerated in *Education Code* section 35294.5.
 - Conflict Resolution and Youth Mediation Grant Program (\$280,000). This

annual grant program provides \$8,000 to small and medium-sized districts and \$16,000 to large districts to support school site teams to attend a Partnership-sponsored two-day training and follow-up one-day training in conflict resolution and youth mediation. Teams comprise of representatives from the district office, elementary school, middle/junior high school and high school.

- School Community Policing Partnership Grant Program (\$10 million). Description of program is under heading, “Violence Prevention Grant Programs.”

“Shifting the Focus”

- *Shifting the Focus* grew out of “The Advanced Training for Violence Prevention Practitioners,” a training series conducted by Deborah Prothrow-Stith of the Harvard School of Public Health and Larry Cohen of the Prevention Institute in Berkeley. In recognition that government structures tended to reinforce singular, rather than collaborative approaches, a two-day forum, *Shifting the Focus: An Interdisciplinary Violence Prevention Approach for California*, was held in March 1997. Facilitated by Prothrow-Stith and Cohen, the symposium brought together leaders from the California Department of Education, the Attorney General’s Office, and the California Department of Health Services. Community-based violence prevention practitioners were included in the forum to ensure that state-formulated solutions would also reflect the needs of people working at the local level.
- *Shifting the Focus* is a state interagency violence prevention partnership. Its membership, 50 of California’s state government leaders representing 22 state agencies and departments, recognizes that effective violence prevention requires a new way of doing business.
- The *Shifting the Focus* group is committed to crafting an integrated approach to the state’s violence prevention goals without sacrificing current programs or curbing local initiatives.
- *Shifting the Focus* addresses the barriers to collaboration by developing strategies to expand partnerships. This effort aims to re-engineer state government away from isolated efforts to a broader emphasis on serving communities.
- *Shifting the Focus* is a strategy that supports state interagency violence prevention partnerships. These partnerships are designed to foster safe, healthy, sustainable communities for individuals, families and children. It will transform the ways in which government does business in order to ensure that California communities are well served through practice at the state level that is modeled after success at the local level.
- Success Indicators:

- Increase Collaboration: Develop new collaborative efforts and initiatives within state government, strengthen existing relationships.
 - Focus on Primary Prevention: Increase primary prevention initiatives utilizing a multifaceted range of activities and strategies.
 - Reduce Duplication: Assess overlap and redundancy, develop mechanisms for sharing information to avoid duplication and re-invention (e.g., Website).
 - Improve Access to Information: Consolidate information, share data and adopt uniform standards for collection and reporting.
 - Formalize the Transition Process: Identify persons in each state agency to coordinate and implement the *Shifting the Focus* agenda.
 - Build Capacity for Collaboration: Provide interdisciplinary training and resources for staff.
 - Develop Program-Specific Collaboration Goals: Produce specific program outcomes from subcommittees (e.g., witnessing violence, mentoring to increase and improve collaboration).
 - Develop Local to State Evaluation: Create mechanisms for community grantees to evaluate improvement in their work with state violence prevention funding, data, etc., as the State reaches new levels of collaboration.
- Strategies:
 - Establish a formal Shifting the Focus structure within state government: The structure will consist of: 1) a core group to oversee direction, quality and progress of the initiative; 2) a larger working group for general discussion, prioritization and information sharing and 3) structural and topical subcommittees to develop strategies to address priority issues such as mentoring, child witnesses or victims of violence and data.
 - Provide a non-governmental facilitator to oversee *Shifting the Focus* coordination and progress.
 - Research best practices related to interdisciplinary collaboration nationally.
 - Interagency Activities:
 - Inventory existing violence prevention programs.
 - Review the role of data and barriers to use in violence prevention.
 - Preserve mentoring initiatives, while promoting state standards and definitions.
 - Define primary prevention and early detection of risk factors.
 - Develop and provide training.
 - Develop an interagency collaboration briefing package.
 - Synthesize all commission reports related to violence prevention in California.
 - Hold hearings between *Shifting the Focus* members and communities.

Safe from the Start

- Children exposed to violence and maltreatment suffer increased depression, anxiety, post

traumatic stress, anger, alcohol and drug abuse and lower academic achievement. New scientific research is uncovering the physiological impact of violence on the developing human brain and the long-term consequences of this exposure. Studies show that children exposed to violence, either as victims or witnesses, are more likely to become juvenile and adult offenders.

- Currently, the service delivery system serves children and families in distinct categories, such as limiting treatment alternatives because the funding does not cover the type of treatment. Although some communities have invested an enormous amount of time and energy into the development of an integrated service delivery system, others need assistance in putting together such a system. Bringing community organizations together to implement this type of system will enhance their ability to respond to children exposed to violence and improve their health and well-being.
- *California Safe from the Start* is a comprehensive strategy to bring community leaders from throughout the state together to assure that California children grow up in safe, healthy environments.
- Attorney General Lockyer is committed to actively supporting state and local community efforts that address the impact of violence on children. To this end, the Attorney General views *California Safe from the Start* as a beginning step.
- The project is three-fold: 1) a statewide symposium was held on May 17, 2000 in Los Angeles; 2) statewide regional forums will be held between September and December 2000 and 3) a follow-up report on community action plans and technical assistance needs to assure child safety and health.
- The symposium was made possible through the collaboration and partnership of the Attorney General's Office; U.S. Department of Justice; California Children and Families Commission; Cities, Counties and Schools Partnership; California Health and Human Services Agency, Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, I Am Your Child Foundation and Court TV. The Attorney General's Office will continue its partnership with the California Children and Families Commission, Cities, Counties and Schools Partnership, California Health and Human Services Agency and Court TV to coordinate the regional forums.
- The symposium and regional forums is designed to bring together local and state policy makers and other community leaders to raise awareness about the devastating physical, emotional and intellectual impact of violence on children; organize community strategies to respond and undertake effective prevention measures.
- Objectives:
 - Criminal Justice and public health education systems recognize the benefits of establishing appropriate interventions, including:

- Children are protected and grow up in healthy environments.
- Community participants become aware of the detrimental impacts on children from exposure to violence, and are committed to respond.
- Innovative strategies are developed by local teams and collaborative o intervene with children exposed to violence and to reduce the number of children exposed to violence.
- Swift prosecution of perpetrators of violence.
- Hold abusers accountable.
- Establish effective ommunication about interventions.
- Increase awareness of problem.

Violence Prevention Grant Programs

- California Gang, Crime and Violence Prevention Partnership Program (GCVPP Program)
 - In October 1997, the Governor signed Assembly Bill 963, now Chapter 885, Statutes of 1997. This law appropriates \$3 million to the Department of Justice to implement the GCVPP Program.
 - The program was created to improve the capacity of communities to provide a broad range of gang and violence prevention services to at-risk youth.
 - The overall goal of the program is to reduce gang involvement, criminal activity and youth violence in communities with a high incidence of gang violence.
 - The GCVPP Program provides funding to community-based organizations and nonprofit agencies to collaborate with other organizations providing similar services, schools, law enforcement agencies, residents, businesses and religious organizations to provide prevention and intervention services that have proven to be successful.
 - Programs may receive up to four years of grant funding at up to \$200,000 per year. Continuation funding in years two, three and four is contingent upon project performance, compliance with grant requirements and the availability of funds.
 - Of 135 eligible applications received, the Department of Justice funded 30 projects; 15 received funding for four years; 15 received funding for two years.
- School Community Policing Partnership Program (SCPP Program)
 - The School Community Policing Partnership Act of 1998 was established by Assembly Bill 1756, now Chapter 317, Statutes of 1998. This Act provides funds to local education agencies (school districts or county offices of education) who work with a law enforcement partner to implement or expand a school community

policing approach to address school crime and safety issues.

- The statute charges the School/Law Enforcement Partnership, a joint effort between the Office of the Attorney General and the California Department of Education with the responsibility to develop and administer the program and award grants to local education agencies (LEAs) and consortia of LEAs.
- The SCPP Program is funded at \$10 million per year. Grantees receive up to \$300,000 spread across three years, with additional start-up funds of \$25,000.
- In 1998-99, we funded 27 grantees. In 1999-00, because of surplus funding from last year, the Partnership was able to fund 37 grantees.

Attorney General's Youth Corps

- This year, the Crime and Violence Prevention Center was awarded a \$500,000 per year, three-year grant from AmeriCorps to launch the Attorney General's Youth Corps.
- The grant will enable the Crime and Violence Prevention Center to engage 36 young people in a variety of crime and violence prevention activities in 12 sites throughout California. They will be training AmeriCorps members in the *Teens, Crime and the Community* curriculum developed by the National Crime Prevention Council based in Washington, DC.
- The AmeriCorps members will, in turn, train youth in communities throughout the state. The curriculum includes training on teen dating, conflict resolution, life skills and community projects to reduce violence.

Community Mediation Service

- The Attorney General's Office is in the process of developing a newly established office within the Crime and Violence Prevention Center. The program, Community Mediation Service, is to assist California communities address hate crimes, settle conflicts peacefully, improve their public safety and quality of life by providing services and skills they can model to develop their own monitoring, prevention, peacekeeping and emergency response systems.
- The Community Mediation Service is modeled after the federal Community Relations Service in the U.S. Department of Justice, which is a statutory program mandated in the 1964 Civil Rights Act.
- The new program will establish a partnership with the Community Relations Service to increase services throughout the state to meet the needs in communities.

Next Steps

- Most importantly and immediately, the state should spend what is necessary to get an accurate and easily-understood picture of what, where and to what effect in California is being spent for prevention efforts.
- Collect data upon which to target limited resources and then determine how to maximize the impact of the dollars we have to spend with public and private partnerships.

I will also be discussing:

- Pro and cons of coordination/collaboration versus consolidation of state programs.
- Summary of Best Practices (e.g., after-school programs, local coalitions and addressing children exposed to violence).