



April 12, 2019

The Honorable Sen. Nancy Skinner
 The Honorable Sen. Holly Mitchell
 The Honorable Dr. Shirley Weber, MA, PhD
 The Honorable Asm. Phil Ting
 California State Legislature
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Budget Request for Increased Investment in the California Violence Intervention & Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program

Dear Senators Mitchell and Skinner, and Assembly Members Ting and Weber,

The 34 organizations jointly submitting this budget request represent a broad coalition of advocacy groups, violence prevention experts, city leaders, researchers, and service providers dedicated to making our communities safer.

We are motivated by a strong body of public health research, which has shown that targeted, sustained investments in evidence-based violence intervention strategies are effective at interrupting cycles of violence, promoting community safety, and saving lives. Some of the most innovative and effective approaches to violence prevention in the nation have been implemented here in California. But other states have achieved more significant reductions in violence by making much more substantial, sustained investments in community-based violence reduction programs. California can learn from this success.

We strongly urge the Legislature act boldly for community safety by bolstering our state's investment in the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) grant program.

Specifically, we request that the 2019 Budget Act:

- (1) Appropriate \$39 million dollars for CalVIP grants, including \$2 million for rigorous and independent evaluations of CalVIP-funded programs; and**
- (2) Continue to strategically target CalVIP resources on: (a) communities with the highest rates and numbers of homicides; and (b) evidence-based programs that primarily serve individuals at highest risk of being victims or perpetrators of community violence in the near future.**

We believe this increased investment in CalVIP is critical to sustain and expand some of California's most effective efforts to prevent the loss of human life, and to achieve the sort of transformative reductions in violence that states like New York and Massachusetts have experienced within the last decade. These state-level investments are also needed now more than ever as the Trump Administration has diverted federal funding for community-based violence intervention efforts, even as gun violence has risen nationwide and in our state.

Background: Evolution from CalGRIP to CalVIP

From 2007 to 2017, California's Budget Acts appropriated approximately \$9 million per year to operate the California Gang Reduction, Intervention, and Prevention (CalGRIP) grant program, which provided matching grants to cities for initiatives to reduce youth and gang-related crime. The Budget Acts guaranteed \$1 million annually for the City of Los Angeles, with the remainder distributed to other cities of all sizes through a competitive application process, now overseen by the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC).

In 2017, the Legislature acted to make important improvements to the program, at the recommendation of many of the organizations submitting this letter. Legislators adopted our recommendations to transform CalGRIP into CalVIP by shifting the program away from sometimes unfocused initiatives targeting gang affiliation and toward a narrower and more objective focus on evidence-based violence reduction initiatives.

Legislators also acted to (1) direct CalVIP grants to localities with the highest rates of violence; (2) require CalVIP grantees to set clear, quantifiable goals for their program, and report on their progress in meeting those goals; and (3) ensure community-based organizations may apply directly for CalVIP grants. These changes worked to direct more funds to the most effective programs in the communities most impacted by violence. With only minimal resources, though, CalVIP has been unable to make more sustained and meaningful investments in communities across the state.

The Need for Additional CalVIP Funding

California has comprehensively strengthened its gun safety laws over the past 25 years and is now generally considered to have the strongest gun safety laws in the nation.ⁱ This legislative activity has been associated with impressive reductions in gun violence that have transformed California within a generation from the state with the 3rd highest rate of gun

homicides and 16th highest rate of gun deaths, into the state with the 23rd lowest rate of gun homicides and 7th lowest rate of gun deaths overall.ⁱⁱ

But significant challenges remain. More than 5,000 Californians are still killed or seriously injured in shootings *each year*.ⁱⁱⁱ And the devastating impact of this violence falls heavily on communities of color, especially young men, for whom murder is the leading cause of death in California.^{iv} Eighty percent of people murdered with a gun before the age of 30 in our state are African American or Latino boys or men.^v

In neighborhoods with concentrated poverty and disadvantage, shootings often take place as part of a self-reinforcing cycle of violence, injury, trauma, and retaliation.^{vi} While relatively small numbers of people are at high risk of perpetrating this violence, whole communities are affected by the threat of gunfire, the trauma of witnessed violence, the loss of public spaces, and the loss of life. This violence also imposes enormous economic costs statewide—costing California’s economy billions every year.^{vii}

With CalVIP’s support, cities like Los Angeles, Oakland, Richmond, and Stockton have implemented some of the nation’s most innovative and effective initiatives to break cycles of violence in their communities. But unfortunately, California has not made sufficient investments in violence intervention programs to meet many other communities’ needs.

In the most recent grant cycle, BSCC received CalVIP grant applications from over 120 cities and community-based organizations, but distributed its \$9 million appropriation in small grants to fewer than 20 applicants stretched over a two-year period.^{viii} As a result, no applicant could receive more than \$250,000 per year. This funding is simply inadequate to achieve the sort of transformative and sustained violence reduction outcomes that our communities demand and that other states have achieved.

Learning from Other States’ Success

The states that have achieved some of the largest reductions in gun violence in recent years—notably New York, and Massachusetts—have strengthened their gun safety laws *and* committed much more significant ongoing funding to effective violence intervention initiatives in their communities.^{ix}

In recent years, California has spent roughly 23 cents per capita on CalVIP annually, while Massachusetts and New York have been spending about \$2.00 and \$1.00 per capita, respectively, on highly successful analogous grant programs.^x That gap widened further last year, as both Massachusetts and New York increased their investment in violence prevention: Massachusetts appropriated over \$20 million for targeted violence intervention programs though that state that has one-sixth of California’s population and one-fourteenth as many fatal shootings.

The results of those investments have been remarkable. From 2010-2017, New York reduced its gun homicide rate by 41%, and had even larger reductions in rates of violence among young men aged 14-30.^{xi} Massachusetts cut its gun homicide rate by 18% over this period,

and saw a 36% reduction among young men.^{xii} Independent evaluations confirmed that these programs were associated with significant reductions in homicide, aggravated assaults, and other violent crimes,^{xiii} and that taxpayers saved up to \$7.35 for every dollar invested in violence prevention.^{xiv}

These impressive reductions in violence in New York and Massachusetts occurred even as gun homicides *spiked* by more than 25% at the national level and also increased modestly in our state.^{xv} The residents of New York and Massachusetts are now less than *half* as likely to be shot to death as Californians.^{xvi} These investments matter.

While the State of California has not committed significant funding toward violence intervention, several California cities have achieved significant reductions in shootings and homicides with ongoing support from the CalVIP program.

CalVIP's Impact

In recent years, CalVIP has leveraged state dollars and local funding matches to support highly effective violence reduction initiatives. For instance:

- **Los Angeles:** 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. **Los Angeles has seen a more than 34% reduction in homicides^{xvii} and a more than 44% reduction in nonfatal shootings since launching GRYD in 2007.^{xviii}** A 2015 report by the Urban Institute found that recipients of GRYD violence prevention services reported significant reductions in violent behaviors,^{xix} and a March 2017 assessment by researchers at Cal State University, Los Angeles found that GRYD incident response teams—just one of many GRYD programs—had prevented an estimated 185 gang retaliations citywide from 2014-15, resulting in estimated savings of \$110.2 million over two years.^{xx} In 2018, Los Angeles had its second-lowest number of homicides in more than 50 years.^{xxi}
- **Oakland:** 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. **Since launching the strategy in 2012, Oakland has seen a nearly 50% decline in homicides and a more than 50% drop in non-fatal shootings.^{xxii}** Last year, Oakland experienced its lowest number of homicides in almost two decades.^{xxiii} Independent evaluators from Northeastern University credited Oakland Ceasefire with reducing gun homicides by 31.5%.^{xxiv}
- **Richmond:** CalVIP helps fund the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS), an innovative city agency dedicated exclusively to the prevention of violence. **Richmond has seen an almost 80% reduction in homicides^{xxv} and a 76% reduction in nonfatal shootings since launching ONS in 2007.^{xxvi}** One of its primary strategies, an intensive, long-term mentoring program for high-risk individuals known as the Peacemaker Fellowship, is now being replicated in both Stockton and Sacramento, with support from CalVIP.

- **Stockton and Sacramento:** Stockton and Sacramento are two of the newest recipients of grants from the revamped CalVIP program, and are using funding to pursue strategies similar to those in place in Richmond, Oakland, and Los Angeles. **Stockton experienced a 40% reduction in homicides and a 31% decline in nonfatal shootings from 2017 to 2018.**^{xxvii} In Sacramento, homicides are down 7% from 2017 to 2018, and last year, no one under the age of 18 was murdered in the city for the first time in 35 years.^{xxviii}

These cities have demonstrated that targeted investments in programs focused on interrupting cycles of community violence can achieve large and sustained reductions in violence in a short period of time. With stronger investment in these programs, California could sustain and expand these programs to more communities impacted by violence across our state.

Making California a Leader in Supporting Local Violence Reduction Strategies

Like most U.S. cities, multiple jurisdictions in California have been grappling with increases in violence in recent years. As cities across the state look to implement violence reduction initiatives to protect their communities, CalVIP needs additional, stable funding to propel, sustain, and evaluate these efforts.

To address this need, we request that legislators appropriate \$39 million for CalVIP. In total dollars, this would represent the largest investment any state has made in local violence intervention initiatives to date, and would make a strong statement about California’s leading role in treating gun violence as a preventable public health and safety issue.

While a \$39 million appropriation for implementation and evaluation of CalVIP would *not* match Massachusetts’s per capita investment (that would require well over \$100 million), this amount would approximately match New York’s, which has cut its gun murder rate by a remarkable 41% since 2010.^{xxix} This increased investment in CalVIP would also be responsive to California voters’ demand for bold action to reduce gun violence in our state and to address egregious racial inequities in health and safety outcomes for young people of color in particular.

A \$39 million appropriation would allow California to make more sustained and meaningful investments in violence intervention initiatives in more communities. For context, Richmond’s highly successful violence reduction initiative has had an annual operating budget of approximately \$3 million; a \$1.5 million per year grant award would, with CalVIP’s local match requirement, allow other localities with similar levels of violence to begin to replicate Richmond’s success.

Given the huge costs imposed by gun violence in California each year, this is a lifesaving investment that is likely to pay for itself many times over.

The Enormous Cost of Gun Violence

This budget request is miniscule in comparison to the enormous costs associated with gun violence in our state. Based on the expenses we can directly measure—including healthcare costs (\$348 million per year), law enforcement and criminal justice expenses (\$625 million per year), costs to employers (\$39 million per year), and lost income (\$5.5 billion per year)—the initial price tag of gun violence in California is over \$6.5 billion per year.^{xxx}

Many of these costs are borne by the public and taxpayers. Up to 85% of gunshot victims, for example, are either uninsured or covered by publicly funded insurance programs (mostly Medi-Cal). Additionally, law enforcement efforts are funded entirely by taxpayer dollars. As a result, the direct cost of gun violence to California taxpayers is estimated at approximately \$1.4 billion per year.^{xxxi}

This staggering number actually understates the true cost of gun violence in California because it doesn't include significant, yet difficult-to-measure costs, including lost business opportunities, lowered property values, and reductions in the tax base. Nor does it include other costly forms of serious violence such as stabbings.

And, of course, these figures also cannot capture violence's enormous personal and moral toll: the lives and loves lost, the generational, cyclical trauma, or the communities torn apart.

In a February 2019 report on addressing community violence, the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health recommended that legislators make it a priority to “[p]rovide funding to support evidence-based local-level strategies to reduce gun violence such as focused deterrence and interventions with high-risk individuals that involve outreach, conflict mediation, and behavioral interventions proven to reduce violence.”^{xxxii}

This is exactly what CalVIP has been designed to achieve. What is required now is for California legislators to make a meaningful ongoing commitment to invest in these effective approaches to violence.

Our CalVIP Budget Request

For the reasons stated above, we strongly urge you to increase CalVIP's capacity to fund lifesaving, community-based violence reduction initiatives by:

- (1) Appropriating \$39 million dollars for the CalVIP program; and
- (2) Continuing to strategically target CalVIP resources on: (a) communities with the highest rates and numbers of homicides; and (b) evidence-based programs that primarily serve individuals at highest risk of being victims or perpetrators of community violence in the near future.

A strong, sustained, and targeted investment in effective violence intervention programs through CalVIP will save lives and pay for itself many times over. We urge you to adequately fund this important program.

Sincerely,

Ari Freilich, **Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence**

Mayor Michael D. Tubbs, **City of Stockton**

Sam Vaughn, **The City of Richmond's Office of Neighborhood Safety**

David Miranda, **City of San Bernardino**

DeVone Boggan, **Advance Peace**

Marc Philpart, **Alliance for Boys and Men of Color**

Jasmeet Sidhu, **Amnesty International, USA**

Amanda Wilcox, **Brady California United Against Gun Violence**

Vaughn Crandall and Reygan Harmon, **California Partnership for Safe Communities**

Lee Winkelman, Rabbi Julie Saxe-Teller, and Ben Ginsburg, **California Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism**

Shimica Gaskins, **Children's Defense Fund-California**

Anthony Smith, **Cities United**

Dr. April Clay, **Clay Counseling Solutions**

Mirel Herrera, **Community Justice Action Fund**

Gary Slutkin, MD, **Cure Violence**

Emily Harris, **Ella Baker Center for Human Rights**

Jacqueline Caster, **Everychild Foundation**

Emily Walton, **Everytown for Gun Safety; Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America**

Shari Silberstein, **Equal Justice USA**

Pastor Michael McBride, **Faith in Action**

Javier Stauring, **Healing Dialogue and Action**

Rick Alanis, Jr., **HOPE Culture**

Maria "Lou" Calanche, **Legacy LA**

Israel Villa, **MILPA**

Sarah Green, **National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, Los Angeles**

David Muhammad, **National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform**

Sue Burrell, **Pacific Juvenile Defender Center**

DeAngelo Mack, **Public Health Advocates**

Rashna F. Ginwalla, MD, MPH, FACS, **San Joaquin General Hospital**

Darlene Kiyon, **Toberman Neighborhood Center**

Fernando Rejon, **Urban Peace Institute**

Pastor Gabriel Villa, **Victory Outreach of San Bernardino**

Anne Marks, **YouthAlive!**

Terrance Stone, **Young Visionaries**

ⁱ See, e.g., Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence Annual Gun Law Scorecard, at

<http://gunlawscorecard.org>.

ⁱⁱ Based on CDC Fatal Injury Reports data for 1993 and 2017, Age-Adjusted Firearm Homicide Rates, available at <https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate.html>. Rankings exclude District of Columbia, and five states for which reported incidents of homicide were low and data was suppressed.

ⁱⁱⁱ Fatal firearm injury data came from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's WISQARS Fatal Injury Reports (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html>). Nonfatal firearm injuries came from California Department of Public Health's Epicenter (<http://epicenter.cdph.ca.gov/ReportMenus/CustomTables.aspx>). 2014 is the most recent year for which the California Dept. of Public Health has released state-level nonfatal firearm injury data, indicating that more than 5,000 Californians were killed or seriously injured by firearms that year. According to CDC Fatal and Nonfatal Injury Reports, the number of gun homicides has increased in California since 2014 and the number of fatal and nonfatal firearm injuries have both also increased at the national level, suggesting that at least 5,000 Californians are still killed or seriously injured by guns annually.

^{iv} National Council on Crime and Delinquency, "Process Evaluation for the Office of Neighborhood Safety" (Jul. 2015), at https://www.nccglobal.org/sites/default/files/publication_pdf/ons-process-evaluation.pdf.

^v Based on CDC Fatal Injury Reports, available at <https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate.html>.

^{vi} Papachristos AV, Wildeman C, Roberto E., "Tragic, But Not Random: The Social Contagion of Nonfatal Gunshot Injuries," *Social Science & Medicine*. 2015; 125: 139-150.; Tracy M, Braga AA, Papachristos AV, "The Transmission of Gun and Other Weapon-involved Violence Within Social Networks," *Epidemiology Review*. 2016; 38(1): 70-86.

^{vii} Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, "The Economic Cost of Gun Violence in California," <https://lawcenter.giffords.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Economic-Cost-of-Gun-Violence-in-California.pdf>.

^{viii} California Board of State and Community Corrections, "California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Program," http://www.bscc.ca.gov/s_cpgpcalvipgrant.php.

^{ix} For a comprehensive discussion of these states' violence prevention efforts, see Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence's report, *Investing in Intervention: The Critical Role of State-Level Support in Breaking the Cycle of Urban Gun Violence*, available at <https://lawcenter.giffords.org/investing-intervention-critical-role-state-level-support-breaking-cycle-urban-gun-violence>.

^x Id.

-
- ^{xi} Based on CDC Fatal Injury Reports, available at <https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate.html>.
- ^{xii} Id.
- ^{xiii} Anthony Petrosino, et al., “The Impact of the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) on City-Level Youth Crime Victimization Rates,” *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation* (Sep. 21, 2017), at http://journals.sfu.ca/jmde/index.php/jmde_1/article/view/464/434.
- ^{xiv} Patricia E. Campie, et al., “Massachusetts Safe and Successful Youth Initiative, Benefit-to-Cost Analysis of Springfield and Boston Sites,” American Institutes for Research and WestEd, Nov. 26, 2014, <http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Benefit%20to%20Cost%20Analysis%20of%20Boston%20and%20Springfield%20SSYI%20Programs.pdf>. Amount reflects 2013 dollar values.
- ^{xv} Based on CDC Fatal Injury Reports, Age-Adjusted Gun Homicide Rate, available at <https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate.html>.
- ^{xvi} Based on CDC Fatal Injury Reports, available at <https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate.html>.
- ^{xvii} Homicide reduction from 2007-2018. Los Angeles Police Department, “Crimes & Initiatives, 2018,” <http://assets.lapdonline.org/assets/pdf/2018%20Crimes%20and%20Initiatives.pdf>, accessed March 25, 2019.
- ^{xviii} Reduction in nonfatal shootings from 2007-2017. Los Angeles Police Department, “Crimes & Initiatives, 2017-2018,” <http://assets.lapdonline.org/assets/pdf/2017%20LAPD%20Crime%20&%20Initiatives.pdf>, accessed March 25, 2019.
- ^{xix} Meaghan Cahill, et al., “Evaluation of the Los Angeles Gang Reduction and Youth Development Program: Year 4 Evaluation Report,” Urban Institute, 35-37 (Sept. 2015), at <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/77956/2000622-Evaluation-of-the-Los-Angeles-Gang-Reduction-and-Youth-Development-Program-Year-4-Evaluation-Report.pdf>.
- ^{xx} P. Jeffrey Brantingham, et al., “GRYD Intervention Incident Response & Gang Crime,” GRYD Research and Evaluation Team, 23 (Mar. 30, 2017), at https://www.lagryd.org/sites/default/files/reports/GRYD%20IR%20and%20Gang%20Crime%20Report_2017_FINALv2_0.pdf.
- ^{xxi} Kareen Wynter, “Crime Is Down in Los Angeles Across Every Major Category, Latest Statistics Show,” *KTLA5*, January 28, 2019, <https://ktla.com/2019/01/28/crime-down-in-l-a-across-every-major-category-for-2018-one-of-the-safest-times-to-live-in-los-angeles-police-chief-says>.
- ^{xxii} Calculated from OPD Annual Crime Reports. Oakland Police Department, City of Oakland, Crime Incident Data Reports: Annual and Quarterly Crime Reports, 2012-2018, <https://app.box.com/s/icb4flrew3pdwtlh9apirnae2x79vs9c/file/376923787621>.
- ^{xxiii} City of Oakland, “Oakland Records Lowest Homicide Total Since 1999,” January 3, 2019, <https://www.oaklandca.gov/news/2019/oakland-records-lowest-homicide-total-since-1999>.
- ^{xxiv} Anthony A. Braga et al., “Oakland Ceasefire Impact Evaluation: Key Findings,” Northwestern University, August 10, 2018, https://p.eastbayexpress.com/media/pdf/oakland_ceasefire_impact_evaluation_key_findings.pdf; Darwin BondGraham, “Study Finds Significant Reduction in Gun Homicides in Oakland Via Ceasefire Strategy,” East Bay Express, August 22, 2018, <https://www.eastbayexpress.com/SevenDays/archives/2018/08/22/study-finds-significant-reduction-in-gun-homicides-in-oakland-via-ceasefire-strategy>.
- ^{xxv} Federal Bureau of Investigation, US Department of Justice, Uniform crime reporting program data: Offenses Known to Law Enforcement, Table 8, 2007-2017, <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s>.
- ^{xxvi} Data provided by Richmond Office of Neighborhood Safety.
- ^{xxvii} Matthew Nuttle, “Police: Homicides down 40 percent in Stockton,” ABC 10 News (Jan. 2, 2019), at <https://www.abc10.com/article/news/crime/police-homicides-down-40-percent-in-stockton/103-04c09461-955d-463e-b9f5-70af8cc751cc>.

^{xxviii} *WMC5*, “For the First Time in 35 years, No Children Were Murdered in Sacramento, CA, Last Year” (Jan. 23, 2019), at <http://www.wmactionnews5.com/2019/01/23/first-time-years-no-children-were-murdered-sacramento-ca-last-year>.

^{xxix} Based on CDC Fatal Injury Reports, available at <https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate.html>.

^{xxx} Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, “The Economic Cost of Gun Violence in California,” <https://lawcenter.giffords.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Economic-Cost-of-Gun-Violence-in-California.pdf>.

^{xxxi} *Id.*

^{xxxii} Cassandra Crifasi, et al, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, “Policies to Reduce Gun Violence in Illinois Research, Policy Analysis, and Recommendations” (Feb. 2019), at <https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-gun-policy-and-research/publications/jhsph-gun-violence-in-illinois.pdf>.