



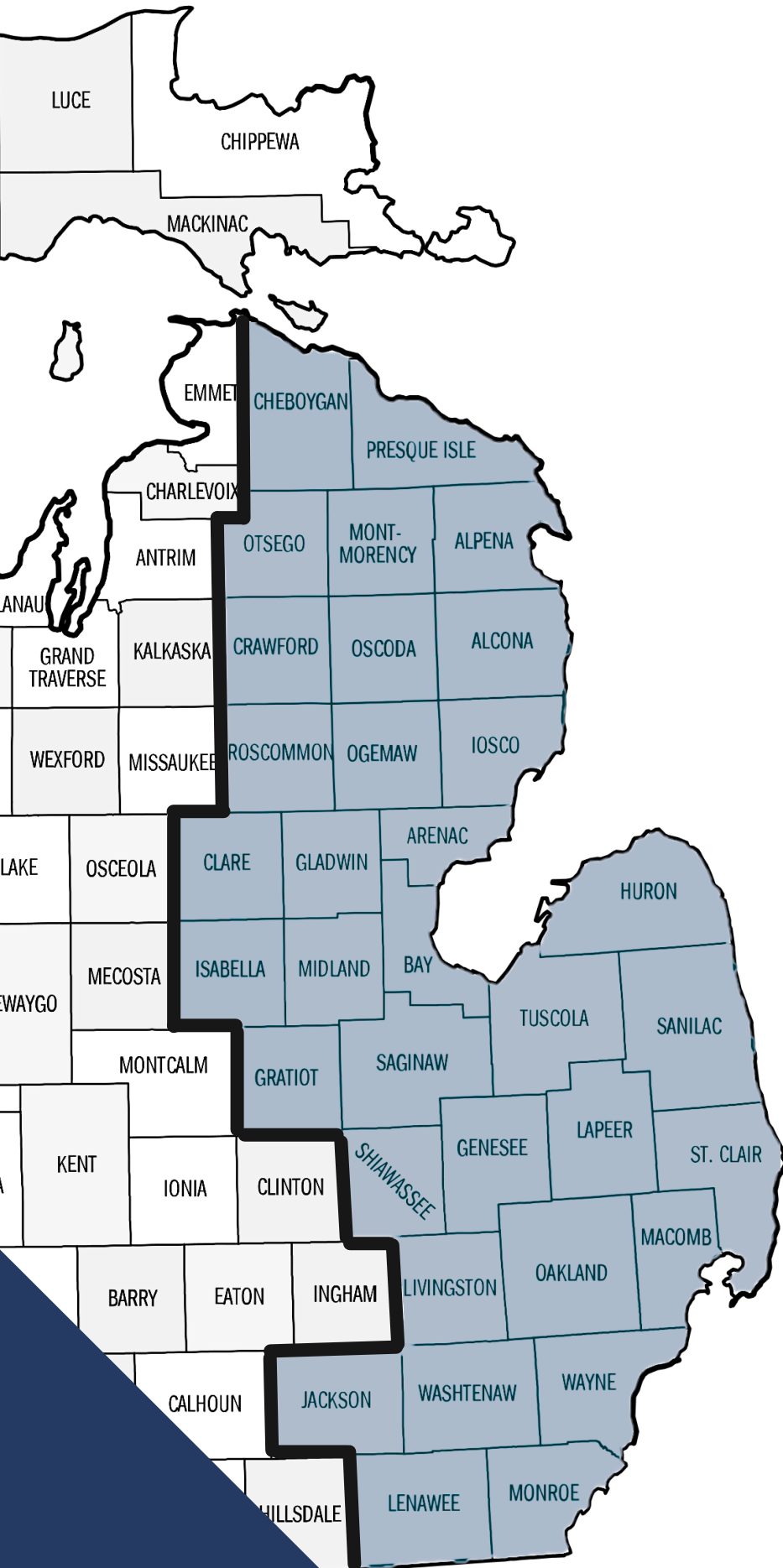
2022

ANNUAL REPORT

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

DAWN N. ISON
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY





THE EASTERN DISTRICT

The Eastern District of Michigan encompasses 6.5 million people in the Eastern half of Michigan's lower peninsula. Our jurisdiction consists of 34 counties, stretching from the Ohio border north to the Mackinac Bridge, and from mid-Michigan east to Canada.

The main U.S. Attorney's Office is in Detroit, with primary branch offices in Flint and Bay City. The office employs approximately 120 Assistant United States Attorneys and 135 support staff.

The office is organized into four divisions: Criminal, Civil, Appellate, and Administrative.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



2022 was a year of transition for our office. We returned to in-office work after nearly two years when most of the office was working remotely. After more than a two-year pause in trials, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District worked to address the backlog, which meant that the dedicated attorneys and support professionals in our office handled more than thirty trials in 2022.

In 2022, we endeavored to accomplish, among other important objectives, three top priorities – rebuilding community trust, reinvigorating our civil rights enforcement efforts, and restructuring our approach to violent crime.

Rebuilding Community Trust.

We know our effort to protect and serve depends in large part on our relationship with the community. And the best way to serve the community is to engage with it, listen to the concerns and needs of the residents of this richly diverse community, and serve as a bridge between law enforcement and the people. We do this in several ways, but chief among them is transparency about our work and legitimacy in the manner in which we carry it out. Community outreach serves a valuable law enforcement function for the government because it helps build trust. Once we have gained the community's trust, it is more inclined to assist us with solving crimes, utilize us as a resource for protecting civil rights, and join the effort to improve the quality of life for citizens. In addition, community engagement builds faith that justice is being administered fairly by a trusted community partner. In 2022, we fully recognized our obligation to rebuild trust between law enforcement and the community overall and the various diverse constituencies within the Eastern District of Michigan.

Reinvigorating Our Protection of Civil Rights.

Protecting Civil Rights is a top priority for our office, as shown through our long history of engaging in robust civil rights enforcement efforts. In fact, our office is a national model for civil rights enforcement. But, in 2022, we committed to do even more. We focused on reinvigorating our prosecution of civil rights violations, hate crimes, pattern and practice investigations, and police excessive force cases. In 2022, we added additional resources – more attorneys and staff – for these purposes. In addition to our Civil Rights Unit being responsible for pursuing civil enforcement actions, I formed the new Public Corruption and Civil Rights Unit to emphasize our commitment to prosecute criminal civil rights cases. We recognized the need to rejuvenate our civil rights enforcement efforts, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic and the various liberties needing protection. We met with our local and federal law enforcement and community partners throughout the district to ensure that allegations of criminal civil rights violations are thoroughly and fairly investigated, acts constituting federal criminal rights violations are sufficiently remedied, and the rights of the victims are vindicated.

Restructuring Our Approach to Violent Crime.

As in prior years, we remain committed to reducing violent crime. But in 2022, we built on what we have learned from our past efforts. Using that knowledge, we have restructured our approach, relying on more

evidence-based strategies and partnerships with additional stakeholders in the community, government, and law enforcement. Because we see that responses to violence can be overbroad and negatively impact community relationships, we have learned that violence is best addressed together, as one community. So, in 2022, we committed our violent crime efforts to focus on the drivers of violence—the people, groups, and places most likely to be engaged in violent crime. Our efforts coalesced around three principles: focus, balance, and fairness. And by balancing our law enforcement strategies with prevention and outreach, we will deter future violence. We hope by being transparent about our work and its outcomes, our community will also commit to this effort to improve the quality of life for its citizens with a renewed confidence in the fairness of our approach.

This approach has already yielded significant results in Pontiac and Jackson. We partnered with local and federal law enforcement to disrupt violent street gangs who were the primary drivers of violence in those communities. As a result, homicides in Jackson decreased by 50% and non-fatal shootings by 53% in Jackson and 70% in Pontiac. We refocused our violent crime efforts in the City of Detroit to address the drivers of violence using these same strategies and more. For example, we placed federal prosecutors in five of Detroit’s police precincts to partner with federal and local law enforcement to address the most violent individuals. We also assigned community federal prosecutors to those five police precincts to meet with each precinct’s Community Relations Council and other local groups to get a ground-level understanding of the issues facing those areas.

In addition, in neighborhoods in Detroit’s 8th and 9th Precincts—areas that led the city in fatal and non-fatal shootings, robberies, and aggravated assaults with a gun in 2022—we initiated an enhanced enforcement strategy for the summer, prosecuting more crimes federally in those areas. We also partnered with the City of Detroit, and dozens of community and law enforcement partners to bring resources and fun activities to those same communities with our “Peacenic” community engagement events. The Peacenics brought job training, literacy programs, mental health and medical screenings, utility assistance, educational and vocational opportunities, and career development programs, among others, to those communities. These helpful resources were paired with fun activities like bounce houses, face painting, chess lessons, basketball free throw contests with law enforcement, a spades tournament, and other activities.

Significant Accomplishments in 2022.

We are proud of the work that we have done in service of this District. In our case work and in our other service to the community, the lawyers and support professionals in our office, along with our partner agencies, had significant accomplishments this year. Among them:

- In fiscal year 2022, our office collected more than \$289 million in judgments, fines, restitution, and forfeiture, more than ten times our operating budget of \$25 million. These funds are being returned to victims and taxpayers.
- Our efforts to target the most violent offenders who are harming public safety resulted in numerous federal convictions. We used traditional organized crime statutes, such as the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (“RICO”), to attack violent street gangs. The best example of our focused approach is the reduction of violence in the City of Pontiac. Federal and local law enforcement identified two violent street gangs terrorizing the citizens of the city. So far, fifteen gang members have been charged federally, and fourteen gang members have been charged in state court in a coordinated action. Since these arrests, shots fired calls in Pontiac are down 64%, and assault with intent to murder cases are down 56%.

- Former Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith was sentenced to 21 months in prison for obstructing justice in connection with a federal investigation of Smith's embezzlement of money from his political campaign account. Smith sought to have two of his subordinate Assistant Prosecutors lie to the FBI and to a federal Grand Jury, who were investigating Smith's embezzlement. As part of his conviction, Smith admitted that he had embezzled \$94,000 from his campaign account by falsely claiming the money was used to pay rent on a campaign office and for a political consultant. In fact, Smith used the money for personal expenses. Smith had served as the elected county prosecutor from 2004 through 2020.
- We obtained a summary judgment victory against the City of Troy in our lawsuit alleging that it violated federal law when it denied the Adam Community Center's efforts to establish an Islamic place of worship in Troy.
- A ranking member of the Los Zetas Mexican drug cartel was found guilty by jury after trial. The defendant facilitated the importation of hundreds of kilograms of cocaine into the District. He faces a significant sentence.
- The office has charged 39 defendants with participating in pandemic fraud schemes, ranging from unemployment insurance fraud conspiracies to fraud in pandemic loan programs. Of the individuals charged in such cases, the United States has thus far obtained more than 20 guilty pleas and one trial conviction.
- A Saginaw man pleaded guilty to hate crime charges for willfully intimidating citizens from engaging in lawful speech and protests in support of Black Lives Matter. The man had called nine Starbucks stores in Michigan and told the employees answering his calls to relay racial threats to Starbucks employees wearing Black Lives Matter T-shirts. He also threatened to kill black people, using a racial slur to refer to his intended victims. In addition, the man placed a noose inside a victim's car with a threatening note.
- As a result of the Consent Decree governing the United Auto Workers union, the UAW had conducted a referendum of its members and was ordered to alter its constitution to provide for the direct election of UAW leaders. This year, in an historic election, eight independent and dissident members were elected to UAW leadership positions in contested elections.
- FCA US LLC (now known as Stellantis) paid a \$300 million fine after pleading guilty to conspiracy to defraud the United States as part of a scheme to cheat U.S. regulators and customers by making false and misleading representations about its emissions control systems on diesel vehicles.

The 220 men and women of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan are dedicated public servants, who work tirelessly every day to improve the quality of life in our community. The additional pages include some of the highlights of more of our work. We invite you to read more and share your suggestions with us at www.justice.gov/usao/mie.

Dawn N. Ison
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan

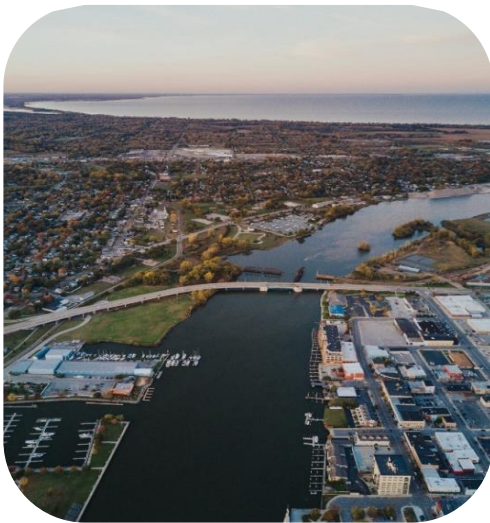
THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

The Eastern District of Michigan is home to a diverse population of more than six million people. Detroit is the largest city in the District, with a population of 4.3 million in its metropolitan area. Other large cities include Flint (406,000), Ann Arbor (372,000), Saginaw (190,000), and Bay City (103,000).

The U.S. Attorney's Office is headquartered in Detroit, with staffed branch offices in Flint and Bay City. In 2022, the office had approximately 220 employees, including 120 attorneys. Detroit is the USAO's largest office, with 111 Assistant U.S. Attorneys and 109 support staff employees, as well as most of the office's administrative personnel. The Flint branch office has six AUSAs assigned, along with five support staff. The Bay City office has three AUSAs and five support employees.



Downtown Detroit



Bay City, Michigan

The Eastern District of Michigan abuts Canada along a 400-mile border traversing two Great Lakes. There are three international border crossings (two bridges and one tunnel), two international airports, and two international railroad tunnels. The border generates drug, human-trafficking, and immigration cases. Detroit, Flint, and Saginaw have high levels of violent crime. Several gangs operate in the major cities of the District and contribute to violent crime and drug trafficking. The office prosecutes a large number of firearms cases. Fentanyl and methamphetamine are the largest drug threats. Frauds involving a heavily unionized workforce and the automobile industry contribute to white collar investigations and prosecutions. The U.S. Attorney's Office also handles Indian Country cases from the Saginaw Chippewa Reservation.

Criminal and civil cases arise from the U.S. Bureau of Prisons Federal Correctional Institution in Milan, Michigan. Other federal facilities include the Selfridge Air Force Base and three Veterans Administration hospitals in Detroit, Ann Arbor, and Saginaw. There is one Indian reservation in the District, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Reservation, in Mt. Pleasant, which is about 150 miles north of Detroit.



Flint, Michigan

REBUILDING COMMUNITY TRUST

To meet our goal of rebuilding community, our office engaged in outreach to communities across the District. This community engagement included communities at risk of discrimination or hate crimes, communities experiencing disproportionate rates of violence, and returning citizens. That engagement included transparency about our work and on our enforcement efforts, educational programming, prevention efforts, and listening sessions to understand the specific concerns and needs of the various diverse communities within the District.



U.S. Attorney Ison attends the Michigan Muslim Community Council's Interfaith Iftar Dinner.

Community Outreach in 2022.

In April 2022, our office partnered with the Disability Rights Section of the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division to host a listening session to discuss access to voting for individuals who have disabilities. The listening session heard from community stakeholders and advocates about barriers that individuals with disabilities face during the voting process.

In June 2022, our office co-hosted an outreach event as part of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. U.S. Attorney Ison addressed stakeholders from Michigan's Asian American community and discussed the brutal murder of Vincent Chin in 1982, on the 40th anniversary of Mr. Chin's death. She detailed our office's attempt to prosecute the murderers under then-existing hate crime laws.



U.S. Attorney Ison presents an Introduction to the Federal Court System to the students at the NAACP George W. Crockett, Jr. Community Law School.

In November 2022, U.S. Attorney Ison participated in the NAACP Detroit Branch's George Crockett Jr. Community Law School, which seeks to demystify the legal system for community members. U.S. Attorney Ison's lesson described the federal court system and the U.S. Attorney's Office's role in that system.

Members of our office participated in outreach events with various LGBTQ organizations to raise awareness about legal rights. U.S. Attorney Dawn Ison and Executive Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) Luttrell Levingston attended a gathering at Affirmations in support of the LGBTQ community in the wake of the attack on the Club Q nightclub in Colorado.

In May and June 2022, our staff conducted outreach to the LGBTQ community. U.S. Attorney Ison met with a group of LGBTQ stakeholders from across the district organized by the ACLU of Michigan's LGBTQ+ Project. U.S. Attorney Ison, Executive AUSA Levingston, and staff from the Civil Rights Unit toured the Ruth Ellis Center, a Highland Park-based social services agency that focuses on LGBTQ youth and young adults of color. Civil Rights AUSA Michael El-Zein spoke to LGBTQ community stakeholders at an event hosted by Corktown Health, an LGBTQ-focused primary health care center in Detroit.



Civil Rights AUSA Michael El-Zein addresses a listening session on LGBTQ issues sponsored by Corktown Health.



U.S. Attorney Ison (not pictured) and Executive AUSA Luttrell Levingston met with a group of returning citizens to discuss community building and combating violence in our district.

Our outreach also included efforts to engage individuals who have been convicted of crimes and served time in prison, or who are on probation. When we assist individuals to return to productive, law-abiding lives, then we can reduce crime across the District and make our neighborhoods better places to live.

Each year in April, the Department of Justice and United States Attorney's Offices observe National Crime Victims' Rights Week nationwide by taking time to honor victims of crime and those who advocate on their behalf. In addition, the Justice Department and U.S. Attorneys Offices organize events to honor the victims and advocates, as well as bring awareness to services available to victims of crime. The theme in 2022 was "Rights, Access, Equity, For All Victims." This theme underscores the importance of helping crime survivors find their justice by enforcing victims' rights, expanding access to services, and ensuring equity and inclusion for all.

In addition to events in Michigan, our victim advocates traveled to California to attend the Office for Victims of Crime's 17th National Conference in December 2022. This conference focused on the unique needs of American Indian and Alaska Native crime victims. It also provided training for victim service providers, law enforcement officials, prosecutors, judges, medical and mental health professionals, social workers, and victim advocates at the tribal, federal, state, and local levels.



U.S. Attorney Ison, joined by local and federal law enforcement leaders, speaks at the National Crime Victims' Rights Week event.



Victim Witness Specialist Sherri Holloway attends Office for Victims of Crime's 17th Annual National Conference.

Following police shootings and unrest around the country, we organized and participated in several community and school forums to discuss police and community trust.

We also worked with ALPACT (Advocates and Leaders for Police and Community Trust), which brings together officials from law enforcement and civil rights groups for the ALPACT chapters in Southeast Michigan, Flint, Saginaw, and Jackson to build community trust.



U.S. Attorney Ison, AUSA Danielle Asher and ATF Industry Operations Investigator Charles Rice attend National Night Out event, a community building and crime prevention campaign.

We continued to participate in BRIDGES (Building Respect in Diverse Groups to Enhance Sensitivity), a partnership between the U.S. Attorney's Office and Arab and Muslim communities. The BRIDGES group met quarterly throughout the district, bringing together leaders from law enforcement and community groups to discuss issues such as border crossing delays, threats on social media, hate crime, and immigration matters. BRIDGES was formed in October 2001, following the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

Along with Mark Totten, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Michigan, U.S. Attorney Ison serves as the Co-Chair of the Michigan Alliance Against Hate Crimes (MIAAHC). Members include the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and other civil rights and law enforcement organizations.

MIAAHC meets quarterly to address hate crimes statistics, plan initiatives to raise awareness, and promote community resilience. In September, we held our annual Michigan Response to Hate conference in East Lansing. This year's keynote session focused on the brutal murder of Vincent Chin in 1982, and how that murder galvanized Detroit's Asian American community. U.S. Attorney Ison addressed the participants, and members of the office conducted a presentation on hate crimes.



U.S. Attorney Ison, Public Corruption and Civil Rights Deputy Chief Frances Carlson and former Civil Chief Susan DeClercq were speakers at the MI Response to Hate Conference in East Lansing.



U.S. Attorney Ison, Executive AUSA Levingston, AUSA Tara Hindelang, and Law Enforcement Coordinator Bob Poikey visited the Detroit Hispanic Corporation's office to meet with community leaders from Southwest Detroit.



U.S. Attorney Ison addresses the Michigan Assoc. of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) Women's Summit, which included middle and high school students from across the state. MASSP is committed to inspiring and developing future women leaders.

We continued our work as part of the Federal Civil Rights Roundtable, a quarterly meeting of civil rights and outreach coordinators from federal agencies working in the Eastern District of Michigan. Members of the roundtable shared information about civil rights issues in our region and worked to collaborate on outreach initiatives.

Our District includes the Isabella Reservation in Isabella County and Saganing Reservation in Arenac County. Our office is responsible for prosecution for certain crimes on the reservation. As part of our prosecution of crimes in Indian Country, our office consults with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe's Tribal Council. U.S. Attorney Ison traveled to Mount Pleasant to meet with the Council in February and Executive AUSA Levinston and Branch Offices Chief Tony Vance traveled to meet with the Tribal Council in July.

We also attended the Uniting the Three Fires Against Violence Conference on Mackinac Island, which sought to address disproportionate rates of violence impacting Native American communities.



U.S. Attorney Ison and AUSA Roy Kranz with members of the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Police Department Detective Nick Diedrich, Officer Neil Shaffer, Chief Harry Ambs, and Officer Luke Dixon at the Uniting the Three Fires Conference.



AUSA Michael El-Zein, the office's Environmental Justice Coordinator, meets with members of the River Rouge Community to discuss National Comprehensive Environmental Justice Strategy.

As part of DOJ's National Comprehensive Environmental Justice Strategy, our office designated its first Environmental Justice Coordinator and held our first Environmental Justice Outreach Session in River Rouge to hear from marginalized communities that often bear the brunt of environmental crimes and violations.

ENFORCEMENT

Civil Rights

Religious Rights. In *United States v. City of Troy*, we obtained summary judgment in a lawsuit alleging violation of federal religious land use law against the City of Troy. Working with the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, we originally filed suit in 2019, after Troy denied zoning approval to the Adam Community Center, an organization of Muslims who live and work in Troy, to operate a place of worship. In March 2022, a federal judge granted the United States' summary judgment motion and enjoined the city from using parts of its zoning laws.

Disability Rights. We filed a lawsuit against Flint Neurological Centre P.C., alleging that the medical practice violated Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act by refusing to provide auxiliary aids and services required to ensure effective communication with patients who are deaf or hard of hearing, such as sign language interpreters. The complaint alleges that Flint Neurological Centre has a long history of failing to provide aids and services necessary to ensure effective communication with patients who are deaf or hard of hearing, including a previous investigation by the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. The complaint further alleges that Flint Neurological Centre failed to provide sign language interpreters or any other communication aids to five patients, in some cases, over several years of treatment. This matter is currently pending.

We also reached a settlement with two local gymnasiums: Gymnastic Training Center of Rochester, Inc., and Great Lakes Elite Gymnastics, Inc. Both facilities offer youth gymnastic programs. The settlements resolve two separate allegations that the centers failed to provide appropriate sign language interpreters or other auxiliary aids to children who are deaf or hard of hearing, thereby excluding them from participation in their programs. Under the settlement, each facility will adopt new policies and procedures to ensure that no one with a disability is excluded from participation in their programs.

We reached a settlement with Vitreoretinal Specialists, PLC, an ophthalmology practice with three locations in eastern Michigan. The settlement resolves an allegation that it refused to allow a service animal to accompany an individual with a disability beyond its patient waiting area. The practice will pay damages to the patient and will adopt a non-discrimination policy that permits service animals to accompany individuals with disabilities into treatment rooms, and will train its employees on the ADA.



Criminal Civil Rights

Criminal Civil Rights Prosecutions. To demonstrate the office’s commitment to enforcing the country’s criminal civil rights statutes, in 2022, the office renamed one of its units as the Public Corruption and Civil Rights Unit (previously known as the “Public Corruption Unit”). Although this unit had previously investigated and prosecuted hate crimes, civil rights, and police excessive force cases, the change in name of the unit emphasizes the importance and priority of these types of cases.

In *United States v. Chokr*, a Dearborn man was charged with illegally attempting to purchase three firearms the same day that he made threats and harassed kids, parents, and staff at Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills. He is also facing ethnic intimidation charges in state court.

In *United States v. Pilon*, a Saginaw man pleaded guilty to hate crime charges for willfully intimidating citizens from engaging in lawful speech and protests in support of Black Lives Matter. The man had called nine Starbucks stores in Michigan and told the employees answering his calls to relay racial threats to Starbucks employees wearing Black Lives Matter T-shirts. He also threatened to kill black people, using a racial slur to refer to his intended victims. In addition, the man admitted placing a noose inside a victim's car with a threatening note.



U.S. Attorney Ison addresses the community at a forum on antisemitism at Temple Beth El.

Public Corruption

Attacking public corruption in federal, state, and local government remains a high priority for the U.S. Attorney's Office. Corruption in government corrodes society by discouraging respect for the law, squandering the public's tax dollars from being spent on the best services at the lowest cost, harming honest businesses that play by the rules, and preventing good people from seeking public office. Our region thrives when we have honest government at every level.

Union Officials. In *United States v. United Auto Workers*, the Court-appointed Monitor of the UAW continued his oversight and investigation of one of the largest labor unions in the country. The Monitor was appointed in 2021 after the United States and the UAW settled an Anti-Fraud Injunction Act lawsuit through the entry of an historic Consent Decree. The Consent Decree stemmed from a multi-year investigation of corruption within the UAW that resulted in eighteen convictions, including convictions of two former International UAW Presidents. The Consent Decree provides for a Monitor to oversee the union's activities for a period of at least six years.

This year, the Court ordered the UAW to amend its constitution to provide for the direct election of the UAW's President and the members of its International Executive Board through a process known as "one member, one vote." This order was the result of a referendum of all UAW members conducted by the Monitor to determine whether to change the UAW's method of electing its leadership. Previously, UAW leaders were selected through a delegate system at a convention, and the Consent Decree required the referendum vote. The UAW's members voted 64% to 36% in favor of the new system of elections.

After having amended its constitution, the UAW held its first direct leadership election, overseen by the Monitor, with the highest number of contested elections in the modern history of the UAW. As part of his oversight of the UAW, the Monitor also brought misconduct charges against two former UAW officials, which

resulted in their expulsion from the union. After seventy years of control of the UAW by the Reuther Caucus, also known as the Administrative Caucus, eight dissident and independent candidates were elected to the UAW's International Executive Board. In 2023, a dissident candidate was elected as UAW International President in a run-off from the 2022 election.



In 2021, the Director of the Office of U.S. Attorneys recognized members of the UAW Prosecution Team for Superior Performance by a Litigative Team in combating corruption in the UAW: From left Eaton Brown, Frances Carlson, David Gardey, Ana Bruni, Steven Cares Maria Koch, and Erin Shaw (not pictured). Unfortunately due to Covid-19, there was no formal ceremony in 2021.

In *United States v. Edmunds*, the former Financial Secretary-Treasurer of UAW Local 412 was convicted of embezzling \$2.2 million in union funds. Over the course of years, Edmunds stole money from the union to fund gambling, pay for high-end vehicles and firearms, and pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in personal credit card expenditures. The court sentenced Edmunds to 5 years in prison, a \$1 million fine, and \$1.9 million in restitution. Edmunds is the eighteenth defendant convicted in connection with the ongoing criminal investigation into corruption within the UAW.

In *United States v. Day*, the former Treasurer of the Detroit Firefighters' Union was sentenced to one year in prison for embezzling over \$220,000 in union funds. Day was a member of the Detroit Fire Department for over 30 years. She was convicted of using union funds to pay for multiple cruises in the Caribbean, personal restaurant expenses, personal cable TV bills, car insurance, and furniture.

DOJ Labor Corruption Statistics. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan was ranked first in the nation in the number of labor corruption cases filed among all U.S. Attorney offices in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021.

City Officials. In *United States v. Spivey*, Andre Spivey, a former member of the City Council for the City of Detroit, was sentenced to 2 years in prison after pleading guilty to accepting \$35,000 in bribes relating to the City Council's oversight of the towing industry.

In *United States v. LeRoy Burcroff*, the former Mayor of the City of Romulus pleaded guilty to wire fraud in connection with Burcroff's embezzlement of over \$15,000 in campaign funds. Burcroff admitted that he had used campaign funds to pay for part of his daughter's wedding, travel, and personal restaurant expenses.

Police Misconduct. In *United States v. Lipkovitch*, a detective with the Highland Park Police Department was sentenced to 2 years in prison after being convicted of conspiring to distribute fentanyl-laced heroin. While on duty and wearing her police uniform, former Detective Tiffany Lipkovitch accepted a cash payment for facilitating a fentanyl/heroin deal.

In *United States v. McGaffigan*, a former Michigan Department of Corrections officer was indicted for possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin. The corrections officer was employed at the Thumb Correctional Facility in Lapeer County. He is charged with possessing the drugs with the intent to deliver them into the prison.

In *United States v. Jones*, Alonzo Jones, a 30-year veteran with the Detroit Police Department, was sentenced to 15 months in prison for taking \$3,200 in cash bribes concerning Jones' oversight of the Detroit Police Vehicle Auction.

In *United States v. John F. Kennedy and Daniel Vickers*, two other Detroit police officers were convicted of conspiring to accept bribes in exchange for directing towing business and for providing inside information concerning a Detroit police investigation of a Detroit towing company. Former Detroit Police Lieutenant Kennedy had been the Commander of the Detroit Police Department's Integrity Unit, a division of the Internal Affairs Unit tasked with investigating misconduct by police officers and other city employees. Kennedy was convicted of accepting over \$14,000 in bribes, while Vickers accepted \$3,200 in bribes.

County Corruption. In *United States v. Marrocco*, Anthony Marrocco pleaded guilty to extortion. Marrocco had served as the Commissioner of the Macomb County Department of Public Works for over 20 years, holding sway over county developers and contractors. As part of his guilty plea, Marrocco admitted that he had coerced a county developer into making thousands of dollars in campaign contributions. Marrocco had withheld county permits on the developer's business projects to force the campaign donations. Marrocco's conviction closes out the Macomb investigation. In total, twenty-three public officials and bribe-paying businessmen have been charged and convicted in connection with the Macomb County corruption probe.

In *United States v. Gunn*, two Wayne County employees of the Roads Division, Kevin Gunn, and John Gibson, were charged with embezzling over \$1.7 million in county funds. Gunn was the manager of the Bridge Unit of the Roads Division, where he had worked for over 34 years. Gibson was a foreman and 20-year county employee who worked for Gunn. Between 2019 and 2021, Gunn and Gibson engaged in a scheme to defraud Wayne County by causing approved Wayne County contractors to purchase 596 generators and other power equipment that were not authorized under county contracts. Gunn and Gibson then diverted the generators for private sale for huge amounts of cash.

School Officials. In *United States v. Morrison and David*, the former President of the Madison District Public Schools Board of Education was charged with accepting over \$560,000 in bribes from a school district contractor. As part of the bribery conspiracy, the President accepted the bribes in exchange for directing over \$3.1 million in school contracts to the contractor's business. The board President also is charged with tax evasion for failing to report the \$560,000 in bribe payments as income to the Internal Revenue Service.

Postal Corruption. In *United States v. Berlucchi*, former U.S. Postal Service Engineer Thomas Berlucchi was sentenced to 4 months in prison for taking \$6,500 in illegal gratuities from Postal contractor Michael Rymar. Berlucchi had accepted free repair work on his cottage, free hotel rooms, and donations to a charity preferred by Berlucchi. Rymar himself had been convicted of defrauding the Postal Service of \$1.2 million by falsely inflating his costs for repair projects performed by Rymar's company. This year, Rymar was sentenced to 15 months in prison for stealing government funds for his fraud scheme. Rymar also forfeited \$1.2 million in funds to the government as part of his conviction. Berlucchi was one of the Postal officials who was supposed to be overseeing the repair projects done by Rymar.

DOJ Public Corruption Statistics. Among all U.S. Attorney offices in the nation, the Eastern District of Michigan was ranked first in 2018, second in 2019, and third in 2022 in the number of local corruption cases filed.

Violent Crime

Reducing violent crime is essential to the success of our region and a high quality of life for our residents. Our citizens should feel safe in our neighborhoods, homes, schools, streets, and places of business.

We used a focused approach, charging violent gun crimes, such as serial armed robbery and carjacking, in federal court where penalties are often greater than in the state system. We also utilized racketeering laws to dismantle violent street gangs and drug trafficking organizations that are responsible for violence in our neighborhoods. Lawyers and support staff in our Violent and Organized Crime Unit, Drug Task Force, General Crimes Unit and Branch Offices in Flint and Bay City all worked to reduce violent crime to improve public safety.

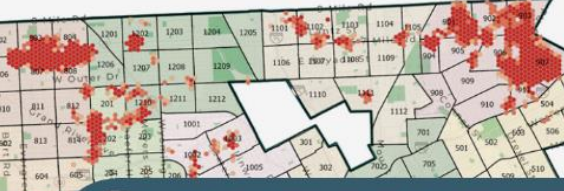



U.S. Attorney Ison announces the Summer Surge with Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan, Detroit Police Chief James White, and law enforcement and community partners.

U.S. Attorney Announces Enhanced Enforcement Strategy Targeting High Crime Areas in Detroit

The United States Attorney's Office, along with the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, the Detroit Police Department, the ATF, and the FBI, launched an effort to strategically focus resources on the most dangerous neighborhoods in the city. These neighborhoods in the 8th and 9th Precincts led the city in fatal and non-fatal shootings, robberies, and aggravated assaults with a gun in 2022.

DETROIT'S PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD





FOCUSED ENFORCEMENT

Federal agents from ATF and FBI, alongside Detroit Police, will focus enforcement efforts in Detroit's most violent precincts

FEDERAL PROSECUTION

Felons arrested for illegally possessing firearms in select areas of Detroit's 8th and 9th precincts will be prosecuted in federal court. The United States Attorney's Office and Wayne County Prosecutor's Office will collaborate to prosecute the most dangerous offenders.

WHERE?	WHEN?
<p>Targeted enforcement will focus on Detroit's 8th and 9th precincts, which lead the city in homicides and several other areas of violent crime in 2022.</p>	<p>Rates of violent crime typically go up during the warm weather months. This targeted enforcement will run between Memorial Day and Labor Day.</p>

United States Attorney's Office • Wayne County Prosecutor's Office

The strategy was a part of the United States Attorney's Office's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) initiative. PSN continues to be the centerpiece of the Department of Justice's violent crime reduction effort.

The unified approach to reducing gun violence included enhanced federal, state, and local law enforcement collaboration and coordinated prosecution efforts to boost existing and ongoing partnerships to address violent crime across the city.

Under the strategy, felons arrested in one of the designated areas in possession of a firearm were immediately prosecuted federally. In addition, any individual who used a firearm to commit a crime of violence or drug trafficking crime was also considered for federal prosecution. The "hot spot" strategy for federal enforcement began on Memorial Day and lasted until Labor Day in September.

Importantly, this enforcement strategy was paired with enhanced efforts from the City of Detroit to address blight and other quality of life issues for residents living in the designated enforcement areas. In one instance, the City of Detroit prioritized emergency demolition of a home that was a major source of crime in one of the designated areas because of the enhanced strategy.

One key element of the enhanced strategy was to hold community engagement events, "Peacenic," in the designated areas where residents could have fun, engage with law enforcement, and obtain resources to improve the quality of their lives. A Peacenic was held on July 9, in O'Hair Park in the 8th Precinct and on July 17, in Heilmann Park in the 9th Precinct.

Detroit's | Project Safe Neighborhood

Peacenic 2022

A collective gathering of the community and law enforcement to share in food, fellowship, and fun in the name of peace.

WITH INFORMATION AND SERVICES FROM:

Bates Academy • Brilliant Detroit • Detroit at Work • Detroit Chess Club • Detroit Health Department • Detroit Public Schools Community District • Detroit Reconnect • Detroit Training Center • Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network • Downtown Boxing Gym • Drug Enforcement Administration • Goodwill Industries • Homeland Security • I Teach Chess • Matrix Human Services • Michigan Army National Guard • Michigan Department of Corrections • Michigan Secretary of State • Michigan State Police • Project Clean Slate • Pure Heart Foundation • Team Wellness Center • 27th Letter Books • United States Marshals Services • Wayne County Community College District • Wayne County Sheriff's Department • Wayne Health • Wayne Metro Community Action Agency • Youthbuild

In Partnership With





The Peacenics featured vendors offering a variety of resources including job training, literacy programs, mental health and medical screenings, utility assistance, educational and vocational opportunities, career development programs, and more. Several law enforcement agencies were also present to engage with the community and recruit to fill vacancies in their organizations. The events also included a panel discussion of Returning Citizens who discussed how they could collaborate to reduce violence in their communities. In addition to the resources, there were bounce houses, face painting, cookie decorating, and a free throw tournament for kids. Adults were able to join in the fun with Hustle Dance lessons, chess games, and a Spades tournament. There was pizza, hot dogs, sliders, and ice cream available for residents. Hooper from the Detroit Pistons and Paws from the Detroit Tigers also made appearances and took photographs with attendees.





Violent Crime Cases

We achieved significant results from our focused approach to target the most violent offenders who are harming public safety. Improving public safety by focusing on the drivers of violence using evidence-based strategies is a significant and critical part of our strategy. Below are cases in which we removed violent offenders from our streets.

In *United States v. Peterson*, the leader of the “It’s Just Us” (“IJU”) street gang was convicted of murder, racketeering, narcotics, and gun charges following a jury trial. The IJU gang terrorized Detroit for years, with close to 40 members at its height. They were responsible for numerous fatal and non-fatal shootings during their heinous attacks against not only gang members but also random citizens, as well as drug trafficking, robbery, and other crimes. The investigation and prosecution resulted in 63 arrests and the seizure of 461 grams of fentanyl, 400 grams of heroin, 74 grams of crack cocaine, 39 grams of cocaine, and 20 firearms. The leader faces a mandatory life sentence in prison for his crimes and was the last of eight gang members who were convicted for crimes associated with their gang activity.



The office was honored by a visit from Assistant Attorney General Kenneth Polite, the head of the DOJ’s Criminal Division, who discussed his focus on combating violent crime.

In *United States v. Edwin Mills & Carlo Wilson*, two Detroit street gang members pleaded guilty to murdering a rival gang member and an innocent 13-year-old bystander at the Troester Market in 2015 as part of a racketeering conspiracy. The two men were members of the “6 Mile Chedda Grove” gang, which terrorized the eastside of Detroit in the early 2010s. It was a violent organization responsible for murders, assaults, robberies, and narcotics trafficking in the Detroit metropolitan area and other states. Mills admitted to participating in the 2015 murder of a rival gang member and an innocent bystander. Both men face 22 to 25-year prison sentences.

In *United States v. Demarco Johnson et al.*, the Johnson family was a long-established Detroit criminal organization that trafficked in various controlled substances. Members of the organization used firearms and violence to control their territory for their drug business. Eleven members of the organization have been indicted for conspiring to distribute fentanyl and heroin. This year, nine of the conspirators pleaded guilty and face extensive prison sentences.

In *United States v. Turner et al.*, a collaboration of local, state, and federal law enforcement led to charges against five members of the Latin Counts street gang for committing drug trafficking and firearm charges in the downriver community of Ecorse. The indictment alleges that five members or associates of the Latin Counts conspired to distribute illegal drugs, sold drugs to earn money and gain respect within the gang, and shared firearms.



In *United States v. Bell et al.*, the Victory Inn was a hotel occupied and, effectively, run by drug dealers and sex traffickers. Bell and seven others were indicted for conspiring to deal drugs or commit other offenses at the hotel. Bell created a lucrative drug trafficking organization at the hotel by cultivating an atmosphere of violence among his co-conspirators and the women who were often victimized there. After a six-week trial this year, Bell was convicted of a heroin and crack cocaine trafficking conspiracy.

In *United States v. Hunter*, two men were charged with conspiracy to commit murder-for-hire and possession of a short barrel rifle. The men agreed to travel from Alabama to Flint to kill people in Flint in retaliation for a prior murder.

In *United States v. Terry*, a Flint area rap musician was indicted for hiring a man to murder a Sterling Heights woman for \$10,000 in cash. The hired hit man drove to the victim's residence in Sterling Heights and parked across the street. When the victim left her residence several hours later, the hit man approached her vehicle and fired seven to eight gunshots at the victim. Despite being shot multiple times, the victim survived.

In *United States v. Michael Mills*, an individual was convicted at trial for unlawful possession of ammunition that stemmed from a revenge killing. At trial, the jury heard evidence that in the summer of 2018, the man was looking for the individuals responsible for his brother's disappearance. Armed with a shotgun, he confronted two cars full of gang members outside of a party store, shooting one of them in the back and killing him. The court sentenced him to the statutory maximum of 10 years in prison.



Armed Robbery. Our prosecutors used the Hobbs Act and other federal statutes to prosecute serial armed robberies because of the significant harm these crimes cause to public safety.

In *United States v. Cooper*, two men were each sentenced to 17 years in prison and a third man was sentenced to 12 years for their roles in the deadly attempted robbery of over 100 kilograms of marijuana from a residence in Sanilac County. The three charged men, plus other co-conspirators, covered their faces while brandishing firearms as they approached the front door of the residence. As the men reached the front door, they kicked it in,

forcibly entering the residence. Some members of the conspiracy discharged their firearms, exchanging gunfire with one of the residents. One resident was shot in the leg by the intruders. One of the residents shot two of the intruders, killing them both. The three convicted co-conspirators then fled the scene and drove off in their vehicles.

In *United States v. Picket et al.*, two men and one woman were indicted on Hobbs Act robbery and firearms charges related to three robberies that took place at a Boost Mobile store, a gas station, and a convenience store all located in Ypsilanti, Michigan in 2021. During one of the robberies, one of the men beat one of the victims and placed a rope around his neck.

In *United States v. Musleh*, a man is charged with robbing at gunpoint three gas stations and one grocery store in Dearborn and Detroit, Michigan. He is charged with four counts of Hobbs Act robbery and four counts of using a firearm to commit the robberies.

Carjacking. We used the federal carjacking statute to prosecute serial and violent armed carjackers because of the significant sentences available in federal court.

In *United States v. Welch*, a Flint man pleaded guilty to committing two carjackings in Grand Blanc and Flint Township. In one carjacking, the man held a gun to a woman's head. In the other carjacking, he beat and kicked a woman causing her severe injuries. In both cases, the man targeted victims at gas stations after midnight. He faces a minimum of 7 years and a maximum of life in prison.



U.S. Attorney Ison and Violent Crime AUSAs Craig Wininger and Barbara Lanning recognized Detroit Police Commander Gerry Johnson, Jr. for his service to the community and partnership with federal law enforcement in the fight against violent crime.

In *United States v. Sturgis*, a Detroit man pleaded guilty to a spree of three violent carjackings he committed in June and July 2020. He also pleaded guilty to additional charges of using and discharging a firearm during crimes of violence. In one carjacking, the carjacker pistol-whipped his victim, while in the second case he shot the victim multiple times causing permanent injuries. The man faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years with a maximum possible sentence of life in prison.

In *United States v. Watkins*, a Detroit man was sentenced to 10 years in prison for carjacking. At gunpoint, he carjacked a man who was unloading his Jeep near Wayne State University. The man fled from the police and lost control of the Jeep he had taken. He then ran and hid in a church prayer meeting, where he was tracked down by a police K-9.

In *United States v. Williams*, a man was sentenced to 6 years in prison for his role in an attempted armed carjacking and robbery, during which a victim was shot in the face. The victim was lured to the location after responding to the man's Facebook Marketplace advertisement offering a car for sale.

Firearms. We combated gun violence by prosecuting illegal use and possession of guns. Our asset forfeiture team used federal law to seize and forfeit guns and ammunition from defendants after their convictions.

In *United States v. Ridenour*, three men from Michigan, Illinois, and Oklahoma were convicted of conspiring to unlawfully manufacture and traffic in firearm silencers. The illegal business was so widespread that gross proceeds topped over \$1 million from the online sale of silencer kits and components.

In *United States v. Thompson*, an Ypsilanti man was convicted and sentenced for possessing an illegal machine gun and aiding a convicted felon's possession of a second illegal machine gun. Evidence showed that the men were self-identified Boogaloo adherents, a decentralized, primarily anti-government and anti-law enforcement movement. Thompson built himself an illegal machine gun with parts he bought and helped the second man build his own machine gun. In October 2020, FBI agents attempted to arrest the second man on weapons charges. He pulled out a gun and started shooting at the FBI agents, hitting one, and dying in the return fire. His machine gun and hundreds of rounds of ammunition—some in magazines taped together to allow for faster changing of magazines—were in his truck in the same parking lot as the shootout.

In *United States v. Thomas*, a Detroit man was charged with straw purchasing the firearm that was used by another individual to shoot and kill DPD Officer Loren Courts. As part of the investigation, ATF agents conducted an urgent trace of the Draco, 7.62 caliber pistol used to murder the police officer. Agents learned through records and video that the man purchased the firearm from a gun store in Eastpointe, Michigan, and that he gave it to the shooter at a nearby parking lot. The man pleaded guilty to illegally purchasing the firearm, and he will be sentenced in 2023.



U.S. Attorney Ison joins DPD, MSP, and our federal law enforcement partners to reaffirm our commitment to reducing violence in the City of Detroit.

In *United States v. Moton*, a man was charged with being a felon in possession of ammunition. He had pulled up to an eastside Detroit gas station, jumped out of his car, and fired shots at the fleeing car of the mother of his two kids. The shooting was captured on DPD greenlight video, and he was apprehended hours later without the

firearm. Three casings were left at the shooting scene, which formed the basis of the charge. The individual pleaded guilty, and he will be sentenced for being a felon-in-possession of ammunition.

Extortion. In *United States v. Douglas*, a Whittemore, Michigan man was sentenced to 6 years in prison on convictions relating to a \$5 million extortion plot using shrapnel-filled pipe bombs the man placed outside cellphone stores in Cheboygan, and Sault Ste Marie, Michigan. The man mailed threat notes demanding \$5 million to telecommunications companies, and he claimed that he was motivated by what he viewed as immoral content being spread on the internet.

Assault and Murder. Our work with tribal police to improve public safety on the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Reservation resulted in several cases targeting violent crime. We also prosecuted several incidents of violence between inmates at the federal prison in Milan, Michigan.

In *United States v. Gilbert*, an individual pleaded guilty to second degree murder and was sentenced to 21 years in prison for fatally stabbing a Native American woman on the Saginaw Chippewa Reservation.

In *United States v. Ashford*, a convicted sex offender was indicted for murdering a woman and shooting her child on the Isabella Reservation in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. The indictment also charges Ashford with assault with the intent to commit murder for shooting the victim's child and for failing to register as a sex offender, possessing a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence and after being convicted of a felony, first degree child abuse, and two counts of domestic assault by a habitual offender. If convicted, Ashford faces up to life in prison.

In *United States v. Sheahan*, a prior convicted sex offender was convicted and sentenced to 30 years in prison for the aggravated sexual abuse of a 7-year-old child which took place on the Isabella Reservation.

In *United States v. Williams et al.*, three perpetrators were convicted of murder-for-hire and sentenced to prison terms ranging from 20 to 30 years. The three men were paid to kill a man in Norton Shores, Michigan in 2016. While one of the three drove their car, the other two men fired into the victim's car, killing him.

In *United States v. Kechego et al.*, a federal inmate was convicted at trial of murdering another inmate at the Milan Correctional Facility by stabbing and stomping him to death. He was then sentenced to 28 years in prison. Another inmate who pleaded guilty to participating in the murder was sentenced to 24 years in prison. A third inmate faces a murder trial in 2023.

In *United States v. Burke*, a Massachusetts man was sentenced to 10 years in prison for attempted kidnapping. The man had tried to kidnap an ex-girlfriend from approximately 20 years ago with whom he had no recent contact. He had previously stalked the victim and restrained her in a vehicle without her consent after their relationship ended. In March 2021, Burke resumed his harassment of the victim, driving from Massachusetts to Michigan, where Burke assaulted the ex-girlfriend's housemate. Burke then attempted to go to the victim's home, but was stopped by police. In his car, Burke had a note to the victim, a stun gun, and a variety of kidnapping tools, including zip ties, handcuffs, and smoke grenades.

In *United States v. Blake*, six people were indicted for conspiracy to kidnap and kidnapping. According to the indictment, the six conspirators joined other unnamed individuals in the kidnapping and beating of a person as part of an organized effort to extract information about a carjacking the conspirators wrongly believed the

person took part in. Members of the conspiracy forced the victim into a house where the victim was punched, kicked, and assaulted with a hospital crutch, a bottle, and at least one pistol.

Drug Trafficking Cases

We focused our drug enforcement efforts on dismantling large-scale drug trafficking organizations, prosecuting individuals using guns and violence in the drug trade, and tackling the fentanyl and prescription pill epidemic. We worked to identify and charge traffickers whose distribution of heroin and fentanyl resulted in overdose deaths.

In *United States v. Zamora*, a ranking member of the Los Zetas Mexican drug cartel was found guilty by the jury at trial. The cartel man had facilitated the importation of hundreds of kilograms of cocaine into the Detroit area. He is facing a minimum of 15 years in prison at sentencing.

In *United States v. Daniels*, an individual was sentenced to 15 years in prison for distributing methamphetamine, fentanyl, and cocaine. The man sold fentanyl-laced heroin to several customers, resulting in three overdoses, including the death of a 23-year-old Ann Arbor man.



In *United States v. Didani*, a drug trafficker was indicted for conspiring to ship huge quantities of cocaine on the high seas. The co-conspirators arranged at least five shipments of cocaine weighing more than 4,500 kilograms, that were seized in European ports. The cocaine was loaded onto vessels in South America and then transported to Europe.

In *United States v. Carranza-Alvarado*, a significant drug courier from Dallas, Texas was sentenced to 14 years in prison. He was arrested driving a semi-truck to Detroit to deliver wine, but his truck also contained 130 kilograms of methamphetamine, 27 kilograms of a fentanyl analogue, and 27 kilograms of cocaine. In total, the drugs had a street value of between \$3 to \$4 million.

In *United States v. Ledesma*, nine individuals in a multi-kilogram cocaine conspiracy case pleaded guilty in May and June 2022, including the leaders of two related drug trafficking organizations. The three leaders of the two organizations were each sentenced to over 10 years in prison. The lengthy multiagency investigation included several wiretaps, and federal agents seized 12 kilograms of cocaine, heroin, and fentanyl, more than \$400,000 in cash, and dozens of firearms.

In *United States v. Fogazzi*, two men were charged with drug trafficking conspiracy after allegedly being caught red-handed exchanging 78 kilos of cocaine.

In *United States v. Scott*, fifteen of the eighteen defendants charged have pleaded guilty in this prosecution of a large-scale drug trafficking organization. This prosecution involved the seizure of 30 kilograms of fentanyl and over \$500,000 in cash. At the time, it was the third largest fentanyl seizure in the United States.

In *United States v. Butler*, an individual, who shipped multiple kilograms of fentanyl to Detroit, was sentenced to 14 years in prison.

In *United States v. Richardson*, eleven members of a Detroit-based drug organization were charged in a wide-ranging drug conspiracy. The charges allege narcotics conspiracy, drug distribution offenses, weapons offenses, and maintaining drug premises related to the ongoing distribution of heroin, fentanyl, cocaine, and marijuana in the Detroit area.

In *United States v. Garcia*, thirteen defendants, from Arizona and Michigan, who conspired to traffic fentanyl, cocaine and cocaine base, methamphetamine, and marijuana were charged with a drug trafficking and money laundering conspiracy.

In *United States v. Delgado*, fifteen co-conspirators were charged in a wide-ranging drug trafficking conspiracy as the result of an FBI wiretap investigation. In two separate takedowns, law enforcement seized over 15 kilos of cocaine, 30 firearms, and nearly \$300,000 in cash. Members of the conspiracy worked together to import approximately 25 kilograms of cocaine from Mexico every two weeks for distribution in the Saginaw-Bay City area. The lead conspirator had a direct line to drug traffickers in Mexico.

In *United States v. Haynes*, a wiretap investigation culminated in the indictment of two men and the seizure of more than 10 kilograms of fentanyl and a firearm. One of the conspirators has pleaded guilty to drug trafficking.

The Detroit Dark Web Task Force

The Detroit Dark Web Task Force dismantled a long-time dark web drug supplier, who goes by the moniker “OpiateConnect.” The lead trafficker built a clandestine drug lab in the basement of a Detroit residence. The lab contained industrial pill presses, binder, and mixers, to manufacture what agents determined to be millions of counterfeit and misbranded pills. Law enforcement seized more than \$1 million in cryptocurrency during the case.



Since May 2022, federal agents in Operation Drivetrain have seized approximately \$4 million in cryptocurrency from wallets used by Mexican money laundering organizations and their associates located in the United States.

In addition, since May 2022, agents have picked up or seized from search warrants, approximately \$2 million in cash. Finally, agents seized 1 kilogram of fentanyl, over 10 kilos of cocaine, and several firearms.

Human Trafficking Cases

Human trafficking cases sometimes involve victims held in bondage. More often, the victims are sold for commercial sex acts and controlled with drugs, intimidation, or violence.

In *United States v. Goodmon*, a father and son were convicted and sentenced to 10 and 15 years in prison for running a drug and prostitution house in southwest Detroit. The two men coerced women, including minors, living in the house to engage in commercial sex acts in exchange for crack cocaine and heroin while under the threat of violence. Police responding to a 911 call to the home found a locked steel gate on the stairs to the second floor, along with three adult women, one of whom told police that the man provided them with drugs and was violent with them.

In *United States v. Gray*, a registered sex offender was sentenced to 20 years in prison for sex trafficking a 14-year-old girl in Detroit over the course of several days. Gray took explicit photographs of the victim and placed advertisements for commercial sex acts with her on the internet, as well as transported her to locations to commit commercial sex acts.

In *United States v. Anderson*, a Southfield man was sentenced to 15 years in prison for sex trafficking a minor. The man had acted as the girl's pimp, arranging for commercial sex acts. He even went so far as to tattoo his name on the girl's forehead and the side of her face to brand her.

In *United States v. Radney*, a man was sentenced to 16 years in prison for sex trafficking two minor girls, aged 15 and 16 years old. One of the girls he convinced to travel to Detroit from Minnesota after promising her a lavish lifestyle. The man kept the girls in a hotel, where he arranged for commercial sex acts, while keeping the proceeds of the prostitution. He committed his crimes while on bond for state court sex trafficking charges.

In *United States v. Booker*, a Warren man was sentenced to 10 years in prison for the coercion and enticement of a 16-year-old girl to engage in commercial sex acts. The man kept the profits from the abuse and distributed sexually explicit images of the victim to attract customers.

In *United States v. McCoy*, a man pleaded guilty to sex trafficking minors in Detroit and Toledo. McCoy recruited several minors, including some as young as 14, to work for him as prostitutes over the course of several weeks. He drove them to hotels around Detroit and near Toledo, set up commercial sex dates online, and collected all the money.

In *United States v. Travis*, a Detroit man was convicted after a jury trial of sex trafficking using force and coercion, as well as producing, transporting, and possessing child pornography. Evidence at trial showed the man was sex trafficking four women out of his home. When police searched his home, they discovered an adult woman chained at the neck to a stripper pole in the living room. She was being held captive so that the man could traffic her to his customers.

Child Exploitation Cases

Prosecutors in our Project Safe Childhood Program convicted a number of men for sexually exploiting children. A growing trend of "sextortion" has emerged, in which predators coerce children into sending them nude photos, with increasingly abusive demands. Our lawyers prosecuted these men, obtaining criminal sentences and forfeiting the electronic equipment used in their crimes. Cell phone technology now provides a

virtual doorway for sexual predators to enter the bedrooms of children from many states away. We urge parents and teachers to talk to children about the dangers of communicating with strangers online, and to assure their children that if they are victimized, they should never be too ashamed to ask for help.

In *United States v. Gregory*, a previously convicted sex offender was sentenced to 10 years in prison for possessing over 600 images of child pornography. The man had distributed child pornography using the Kik message app, and the material included sexually sadistic images of prepubescent children.

In *United States v. Tessner*, a resident of Harrison, Michigan was sentenced to 40 years in prison for the sexual exploitation of children. The Harrison man met a 14-year-old victim online, and he caused her to create sexually explicit images of herself, as well as meeting her in person and having sexual contact with her. He also coerced the victim to create sexually explicit images of a 3-year-old child. The man's crimes were aggravated by the fact that he was a registered sex offender at the time of his offenses.



AUSA Sara Woodward speaks about human trafficking to members of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe in Mt. Pleasant.

In *United States v. Vellner*, another registered sex offender was sentenced to 25 years in prison for the attempted coercion and enticement of a minor to engage in illegal sexual activity and receiving child pornography. The man had sought to entice what he believed was a 13-year-old girl into sending him sexually explicit photos. The man also was caught in possession of 4,317 images and 320 videos of child pornography, including images of infants or toddlers. The man used “ILuv2RapeLiLgirls” as a password to his accounts.

In *United States v. Shipps*, a former University of Michigan violin professor was sentenced to 5 years in prison for transporting a girl under the age of eighteen across state lines for the purpose of engaging in illegal sex with her.

In *United States v. Descro*, a Waterford man was sentenced to 50 years in prison for sexually exploiting at least ten different children. In one instance, the man videotaped his sexual assault on a 7-year-old boy and then distributed it over the dark web. In some cases, he would take on fake personas in order to convince teenage boys to produce sexually explicit images and videos of themselves, which the man then distributed over the internet. Using videos procured from his victims, the man would blackmail the boys into producing more videos for distribution as child pornography.

In *United States v. Mariani*, a Royal Oak man who repeatedly abused underage girls was sentenced to 11 years in prison for coercing and enticing a minor to engage in illegal sexual activity and for receiving child pornography. The man had coerced three different 14-year-old girls to engage in illegal sexual activity.



AUSA Alison Furtaw, DPD's 4th Precinct and FBI Detroit present at Priest Elementary-Middle School in Detroit as part of the USAO's School Safety Initiative.

In *United States v. Vinyard*, a Ypsilanti man was sentenced to 25 years in prison for attempting to produce child pornography. The man had offered two 14-year-old victims “modeling opportunities” and money in exchange for sex. In response to the concerns of the victims’ parents, an undercover officer posing as a female student contacted the man who offered her money to record sexual activity.

In *United States v. Milley*, a 68-year-old Canadian church Pastor was charged with traveling in foreign commerce to have sex with a minor. The Canadian man traveled to the district from Canada, where he induced a 15-year-old girl to perform sex acts on him at a hotel room. The man had met the girl over the internet. He was extradited from Canada in February 2022.

In *United States v. Decker*, a Clinton Township man was sentenced to 30 years in prison for coercing several minors into sending him sexually explicit photographs of themselves. In one case, he met a 13-year-old girl on Snapchat and requested that she make and send him sexually explicit images of herself. When she stopped sending him images, he threatened to retaliate against her if she did not continue to send him explicit photos.

In *United States v. Harvey*, a Pontiac man was sentenced to 10 years in prison for the sexual coercion and enticement of a minor. The man messaged the 13-year-old daughter of a family friend on Instagram. He then coerced the girl to film and send him a video of child pornography through SnapChat.

In *United States v. Lantzy*, a Roscommon man who was convicted at trial in 2021, was sentenced to over 19 years in prison for possessing, receiving, and transporting child pornography. The man was a serial sex offender with four prior sexual misconduct convictions. He came to the attention of law enforcement when he impersonated an EMT at a high school football game, and he came onto the field to aid an injured player. Another student contacted law enforcement after he saw child pornography in the man’s house, which was later searched by law enforcement.

In *United States v. McShan*, a Lansing man was sentenced to 25 years in prison following his conviction at trial for producing child pornography, enticement of a minor to engage in illegal sex, and obstruction of justice. The man met a minor victim over social media, and he quickly began an abusive and sexual relationship with her. Using threats and flattery, he then convinced her to videotape herself and another minor victim engaging in sexually explicit conduct. The man also convinced his girlfriend to write a false confession to the criminal activity.



AUSA Jeremiah Smith (left) and law enforcement partners present to middle schoolers as part of the USAO's School Safety Initiative

In *United States v. Ciesielski*, a registered sex offender was sentenced to 45 years in prison for manufacturing child pornography. The man took sexually explicit images of a family friend's infant daughter while he was babysitting.

In *United States v. Patel*, a Canton man was sentenced to 19 years in prison for the sexual exploitation of children when he told a 10-year-old girl to take his cellular phone and make a video that produced a visual depiction constituting child pornography. The victim estimated that this occurred on approximately 30 occasions. Patel abused this victim and others for years, beginning when she was as young as 5 and continuing until she was 12. Patel used his wife's status as a youth leader at their Temple as a means to access to the girls he abused.

In *United States v. Hartley*, a Taylor man was sentenced to 25 years in prison after he posed as a teenage girl on Skype and persuaded a minor to send sexually explicit images. In other incidents, Hartley admitted to using the social media app Kik to gather sexually explicit images from two 13-year-old boys in 2014 and 2015. Hartley victimized over 100 minors and was in possession of 46,153 images of child pornography.

National Security

Countering terrorism remained the top priority of the U.S. Department of Justice, and our National Security Unit focused on investigations relating to border security, international and domestic terrorism, terrorism financing, export violations, threats, trade secrets, and other violations that affect our national security.

Terrorism. In *United States v. Naser*, a Westland man was charged with attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, commonly known as ISIS, a designated foreign terrorist organization,

and for being a felon in possession of a destructive device. The man is charged with attempting to support ISIS by volunteering his services, knowing that ISIS was a designated terrorist organization. In addition, Naser is charged with being a felon in possession of a destructive device.

Espionage. In *United States v. Chu*, an employee of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was charged with making false statements concerning his contacts with the Taiwanese Navy and falsifying records in a federal investigation related to his application for a security clearance. The Ypsilanti man had recently applied for a three-year assignment to the United States Embassy in Singapore working for the United States Navy. In seeking a “Secret” security clearance, the man made several false statements failing to disclose extensive contacts with members of the Taiwanese Navy and a Taiwanese company, including multiple meetings with members of the Taiwanese Navy on a military base in Taiwan. The man also sought to conceal the fact that he is still a citizen of Taiwan.

Immigration. In the case of *United States v. Soares*, a naturalized U.S. citizen, who was originally from Brazil, was arrested and charged with smuggling four Brazilian immigrants into the United States by jet ski across the St. Clair River.



The U.S. Attorney's Office honored its military veterans during a Veteran's Day appreciation event.

Fraud

Another enforcement priority is fraud, encompassing corporate fraud, environmental violations, health care fraud, identity theft, and other offenses. We used civil and criminal enforcement tools to combat fraud.

Environmental Offenses. Environmental enforcement is vitally important to our district. Clean air and water are among Michigan's most valuable assets, and their protection is essential to our state's future. We used criminal and civil remedies to bring violators to justice.



In June 2022, FCA US LLC (now known as Stellantis) pleaded guilty to conspiracy to defraud the United States, commit wire fraud, and violate the Clean Air Act. The charges stem from the company's scheme to defraud U.S. regulators and customers by making false and misleading representations about its emissions control systems on more than 100,000 Jeep Grand Cherokee and Ram diesel vehicles. FCA US LLC was ordered to pay a criminal fine and forfeiture of \$300 million.

COVID Relief Fraud. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government undertook enormous expenditures to provide relief to the economic hardships to people and communities that resulted. Criminal fraudsters sought to profit from and cheat government relief and unemployment programs.

Combating fraud associated with the pandemic has been a major priority for the office. There is a broad consensus that taking advantage of a national calamity to steal money is outrageous behavior. The office has charged more than 39 defendants with participating in pandemic fraud schemes, ranging from unemployment insurance fraud conspiracies to fraud affecting pandemic loan programs. Of the individuals charged in such cases, we have obtained more than 20 guilty pleas and one trial conviction, with the remaining cases pending.



U.S. Attorney Ison presents a U.S. Attorney's Award to the COVID litigation team that handled over 1,000 compassionate release cases during the pandemic.

In *United States v. Richardson & Taylor*, a Detroit couple was sentenced to 8 years and 2 1/2 years in prison for their roles in a multi-million-dollar unemployment insurance fraud scheme aimed at defrauding the State of Michigan and the U.S. government of funds earmarked for unemployment assistance during the pandemic. The two men conspired with a former contract employee for the State of Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency to fraudulently release government funds that were intended to support individuals who lost their jobs during the pandemic. The men both pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering.

In *United States v. Taylor*, an individual was sentenced to 6 years in prison on charges of wire fraud and aggravated identity theft arising out of a pandemic fraud and credit card scheme. He obtained other people's

credit cards by bribing letter carriers in exchange for credit cards and other access devices stolen from mail routes in multiple states. After the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the man's scheme expanded to include obtaining pandemic-related unemployment insurance benefits to which he was not entitled by filing fraudulent unemployment insurance claims in Michigan and Pennsylvania. He was ordered to pay \$774,000 in restitution to his victims.

Health Care Fraud. Our criminal and civil attorneys worked closely together, along with the Justice Department's Medicare Fraud Strike Force, to attack health care fraud. We charged doctors, pharmacists, and other health care providers with making fraudulent claims to Medicare and other insurance programs. In some instances, doctors performed medical procedures that were medically unnecessary, exposing patients to risk and harm, so that the doctors could submit fraudulent reimbursement claims to insurers. In other cases, we charged defendants with diverting prescription drugs for illicit use, which contributes to the abuse of prescription pills.

In *United States v. Jankowski*, a Bingham Farms physician was convicted at trial on thirty charges related to the unlawful distribution of drugs and health care fraud. The doctor wrote unnecessary prescriptions for Oxycontin, morphine, hydrocodone, and Xanax. He also prescribed drugs after receiving cash from patient recruiters who brought patients to his practice. He issued more than 3 million controlled substances to individuals outside the course of professional medical practice. As part of his scheme, the doctor submitted false and fraudulent insurance claims asserting that he had provided necessary treatment to patients. The doctor received more than \$29.3 million from the auto and private insurance companies and more than \$6 million from Medicare and Medicaid. He faces up to 20 years in prison.

In *United States v. Makki*, a licensed pharmacist was sentenced to 6 years in prison for his role in a scheme to defraud health care insurers by submitting claims for drugs that were not actually purchased. He was ordered to pay \$9.8 million in restitution and to forfeit \$1.1 million in funds seized by law enforcement from his accounts.

In *United States v. Godiali*, a Bay City vascular surgeon pleaded guilty to participating in a scheme to defraud Medicare and Medicaid of approximately \$19.5 million, which he will be required to repay in restitution. The office is also seeking over \$39 million in forfeiture seized from the doctor's bank accounts. The surgeon submitted fraudulent billings to medical insurers seeking reimbursement for procedures that were never performed.

In *United States v. Foster et al.*, six individuals, including two doctors and the operators of three pain clinics, were indicted for conspiring to illegally distribute over 500,000 opioid pills worth \$2.6 million. At the pain clinics, patients were recruited via telehealth. Then, doctors were paid to illegally issue opioid prescriptions, with no physical examination, for patients who had no legitimate medical need for the drugs.

In *United States v. Oniango*, a Dearborn physician was sentenced to 4 years in prison for conspiring with patient recruiters to distribute over 12,000 hydrocodone pills. The doctor had attempted to flee to Mexico while on bond, but he was returned to the United States by Mexican border agents. He agreed to forfeit \$38,000 in cash seized from his office.

In *United States v. Kirkpatrick*, a Birmingham physician and another man were charged with conspiring to illegally distribute prescription opioids. Using fraudulent medical records and cash payments, the two men distributed more than 574,604 dosage units of oxycodone and other powerful opioids, with a street value of more than \$17 million.

Bank, Mail, and Wire Fraud. In *United States v. DuMouchelle*, a Birmingham jewelry buyer, auctioneer, and appraiser was sentenced to 12 years in prison after pleading guilty to devising and executing a scheme to defraud a client out of \$12 million. The man convinced the client to transfer \$12 million to his account to pay for a fictitious “Yellow Rose” diamond. As part of his plea agreement, the court ordered the man to pay a total of \$25 million in restitution based on fraud losses suffered by other victims of his fraudulent schemes.

In *United States v. Middlebrooks*, an equity fund CEO was charged with bilking over 100 investors of \$27 million by fraudulently exaggerating his fund’s investment performance and by embezzling from the fund. After the fund started failing, the CEO exaggerated the investment returns of the fund in order to attract new customers to keep the fund afloat. He also embezzled money from the fund to pay for personal living expenses and his wife’s business.

In *United States v. Accettola*, a former resident of Macomb County was sentenced to over 11 years in prison for defrauding seventeen people of over \$4 million in an investment fraud scheme. He told the victims that the money they invested with him was in support of various commercial construction projects in Michigan and Florida, all of which were fraudulent.

Tax Fraud and Identity Theft.

In *United States v. Luter et al.*, seven individuals, who referred to themselves as the “Clear Gods,” were indicted for conspiracy to commit wire fraud and aggravated identity theft related to a \$28 million cellphone upgrade fraud scheme spanning multiple states. The co-conspirators engaged in over 26,000 acts of fraud over multiple years. They purchased the personally identifiable information of their victims over the internet, and then used the information to purchase cellphone upgrades at Apple and AT&T retailers.

In *United States v. Johnson-Brown*, a Flint Man was sentenced to 9 years in prison for using the stolen identities of dozens of victims to commit identity theft and bank fraud. From 2017 to 2021, the man used stolen social security numbers and other personal information to open lines of credit in his victims’ names. He then used the fraudulent credit accounts to steal more than \$422,000 worth of merchandise. Johnson-Brown had a history of cheating and deceiving people, having previously been convicted of eight fraud crimes between 2008 and 2016.

In *United States v. Long*, a member of the Glock Boyz street gang was sentenced to 5 years in prison after being convicted of aggravated identity theft, wire fraud, and illegal possession of firearms. The gang member engaged in wire fraud by submitting false applications for federal unemployment insurance benefits using stolen identities totaling over \$300,000.

Alternative to Prison—Eastern District of Michigan’s Restart Program

In addition to our criminal enforcement work, our office also continued our partnership with the Eastern District of Michigan Restart Program, an alternative to prison program with the United States District Court, the United States Pretrial Services Office, the United States Probation Department, and the Federal Community Defender’s Office. The Program team members are committed to providing an alternative to incarceration, in appropriate cases, which will address adverse behavior through a blend of treatment, sanction alternatives, and incentives. This Program is available to selected individuals who agree to participate and enter a guilty plea to some or all of the charges they face.

The Restart Program is voluntary. All participants are required to: (a) sign a Restart Program Contract in which they agree to abide by the conditions of the Program; and (b) plead guilty to one or more counts pursuant to a plea agreement. Successful completion of the Restart Program takes between 12 and 18 months, and would result in either a sentence of probation, a reduction of a felony charge to a misdemeanor, or outright dismissal of the felony charge. Participants engage in programs to address underlying causes of their criminal conduct and attend regularly scheduled Restart in-court proceedings that include reports on their progress in the Program.

The class of 2022 had 5 participants. All of them graduated from the program in December 2022, and all of their felony convictions were dismissed. Since the inception of the Restart Program in 2017, 23 individuals have successfully completed the Program.

Civil Enforcement Cases

Our office is responsible for pursuing civil actions against individuals and public and private entities that engage in fraud, violate federal laws, divert controlled substances, or damage federal lands or resources. Cases may be pursued under the False Claims Act, Stark Act, Anti-Kickback Statute or Controlled Substances Act, among other statutes. Under the False Claims Act, the United States may recover treble damages and additional penalties from those who use false claims or statements to obtain money from the federal government.

In *United States v. NH Learning Solutions Corp (NHLS)*, we joined with the Civil Division of the Justice Department to file a civil complaint under the False Claims Act (FCA) against NHLS. The complaint alleges that NHLS violated the FCA by knowingly submitting false claims to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for inflated tuition benefits under the Post-9/11 GI-Bill. Michigan-based NHLS provides technology education courses at approximately fifteen locations in the Midwest and Northeast.

In another False Claims Act case, our office, working alongside the Civil Division's Fraud Section, obtained a settlement where a gynecologic oncologist agreed to pay \$775,000 to resolve claims that he violated the False Claims Act by submitting or causing the submission of false claims for payment to federal health care programs related to alleged medically unnecessary surgical procedures he performed. As part of the settlement, Dr. Malviya agreed to be excluded from Medicare, Medicaid, and all other federal health care programs for a period of three years.



Left: In 2022, U. S. Attorney Ison presents a U.S. Attorney's Award honoring AUSA Caroline Burgunder and Senior Legal Assistant Michelle Said Land, both of the Affirmative Litigation Unit, for their work in the case of In re McLaren Health Care Corp. Their exceptional work resulted in a \$7.75 million settlement with the McLaren Health Care Corporation, which, in 2021, was the highest settlement in the nation obtained for a Civil Controlled Substances Act violation by a hospital system. Right: Caroline Burgunder and Michelle Said Land with the award

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HONORS AND AWARDS



U.S. Attorney Ison was honored to be appointed to the Attorney General's Advisory Committee with other select U.S. Attorneys to provide advice and guidance to Attorney General Merrick Garland.

Attorney General Garland Honors Long-Serving Detroit AUSA

In September 2022, Attorney General Merrick Garland invited Detroit Assistant U.S. Attorney Carolyn Bell-Harbin to attend the investiture ceremony of Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. Carolyn is an AUSA in the office's Affirmative Litigation Unit of the Civil Division, and she has worked for the Department of Justice for forty years. General Garland invited the five African American employees of the Department with the longest seniority to attend Justice Jackson's investiture in Washington, D.C. as the first female African American Supreme Court Justice. Carolyn was deeply honored to represent the Department's employees on this important occasion.



Bell-Harbin- 40-year employee of the Department.



Attorney General Garland, Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco, and Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta welcome AUSA Bell-Harbin and other DOJ honorees.

JOHN MARSHALL AWARDS

Each year, the Department of Justice recognizes employees for outstanding public service. In 2022, Assistant United States Attorney Doug Salzenstein and former Assistant U.S. Attorney Mitra Jafary-Hariri were recipients of the U.S. Attorney General's John Marshall Award for their exceptional investigation and prosecution of Chaka Castro, who led a crew that committed a string of armed home invasions across the country including in Michigan, New York, Ohio, Texas, and New Jersey. Castro and her six crew members were charged and convicted of racketeering and firearms-related offenses after two trials and multiple guilty pleas. The John Marshall Award is one of the Department of Justice's highest awards presented to attorneys, recognizing them for their contributions and excellence in specialized areas of legal performance.



AUSA Doug Salzenstein

FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD AWARDS



The Federal Executive Board recognized two of our support staff professionals, Kristi Bashaw (left) and Michelle Gangler (right) who were honored for their exemplary service as federal employees. Both work in our Bay City office and were nominated by Branch Chief Tony Vance (center).

IN MEMORIAM

Tyrone Jackson served as the lead CSO in the Detroit office for many years and was always a bright, warm face as we entered the building each morning. He tragically passed in February 2022.



The USAO, Marshal's Service, Bankruptcy Court, and Chief Judge Sean Cox gathered to celebrate the life of Court Security Officer Tyrone Jackson, who died tragically in February of this year. U.S. Attorney Ison unveiled a memorial plaque dedicating the control room at 211. W. Fort Street to honor Jackson.