



U.S. Attorney's Report to the District

Late last year, Attorney General Eric Holder announced his Anti-Violence Strategy, which set forth a renewed commitment to reducing and preventing violent crime across the country. The strategy is based on the tenet that “[v]iolence prevention is a three-legged stool requiring strong enforcement, effective prevention, and viable reentry programs. Without reinforcement of any leg of that stool, the strategy will fail to achieve its full potential for necessary community impact.”

The cornerstone of the strategy is the vigorous enforcement of gun, gang and organized drug crime, which remains the Department's core mission. In keeping with this mission, the U.S. Attorney's Office in the District of Connecticut, along with its federal, state and local law enforcement partners, has vigorously prosecuted gun, gang and organized drug crime in Connecticut's major cities. Some recent notable examples include:

- In May, a long-term investigation of the Stamford chapter of the Latin Kings resulted in the indictment of sixteen individuals on weapons and narcotics charges with more than 100 firearms, including machine guns, seized.
- In June, following a bench trial United States District Judge Christopher F. Droney found Larry Corbett, also known as “China Man,” of Bridgeport, guilty of one count of kidnapping resulting in death and one count of causing the death of George McPherson through the use of a firearm in perpetration of a robbery (felony murder). Both of these charges carry a mandatory term of imprisonment of life.
- Also in June, a federal jury in New Haven voted unanimously to impose the federal death penalty against Azibo Aquart, of Bridgeport, for murdering three Bridgeport residents on August 24, 2005. Aquart was the founder and leader of a drug trafficking group that primarily sold crack cocaine out of an apartment building in Bridgeport; Aquart and his associates participated in acts of violence, such as threats and assaults, to maintain their control over the group's drug distribution activities, including the brutal murders charged in this case.

While enforcement is part of the core mission in the Anti-Violence Strategy, as the Attorney General has said, “[p]rosecution alone will not solve the violence problem within communities. Put simply, we cannot arrest our way out of this problem. We must augment our

enforcement efforts with support for viable, community-based crime prevention efforts in neighborhoods beset by violence. We must therefore focus on front-end solutions to violent crime, rather than simply enforcing the law reactively on the back-end of the problem.”

In April 2011, the Attorney General held a National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention Summit to discuss how our nation can address violence among our nation’s young people. The Attorney General stated that “addressing childhood exposure to violence– and implementing bold, innovative and collaborative solutions– is a top priority for this administration.”

On April 12, 2011, I convened a meeting of approximately thirty stakeholders from local, state and federal public and private offices in Connecticut. The purpose was twofold: (1) to solicit ideas and advice based on the stakeholders’ expertise and experience regarding outreach efforts in crime prevention, and (2) to seek ideas and suggestions for a conference we will host later this month on preventing youth violence. The diverse group was receptive and enthusiastically gave their time to address these important topics. Later in the month, I also hosted chiefs and other senior officers from the largest police departments in the State, along with senior representatives from the Connecticut State Police, the Chief State’s Attorney’s Office and several other State’s Attorney’s Offices. We shared prepriorities, initiatives and other observations on preventing violent crime.

Based on these two meetings, it was evident that a strong outreach effort exists in Connecticut with respect to the prevention of youth violence and positive youth development and that many individuals, organizations and program are dedicated to this mission and are involved in exciting and successful programs. I decided to host our upcoming conference with the goal of better educating community members and bringing together under one roof those in Connecticut most interested, knowledgeable and professionally active in this significant topic, as well as special guests from outside Connecticut to discuss best practices with us.

The conference, entitled Youth Violence Prevention and Positive Youth Development, will take place on June 28, 2011 at the Connecticut Convention Center. It is geared toward teachers, educators, mental health workers, police officers, probation and parole officers, prosecutors and public defenders, community service providers, clergy and others interested in this topic. The conference will feature remarks from, among others, Governor Malloy, Assistant Attorney General Lanny Breuer, Dr. Steve Perry, and David Kennedy. It will also include approximately twelve expert panels addressing current issues, including place-based and evidence-based programs and ideas.

I hope this conference will create more partnerships at the state and federal levels, which can then implement bold, innovative and collaborative solutions to this significant problem. I hope to see you at the conference. More information on the conference, including a registration form, can be found on our website.