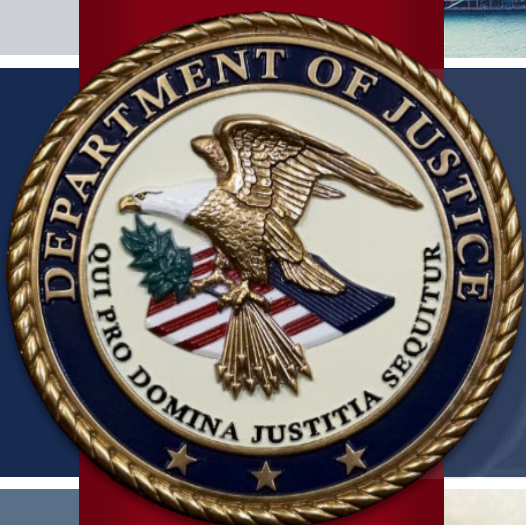
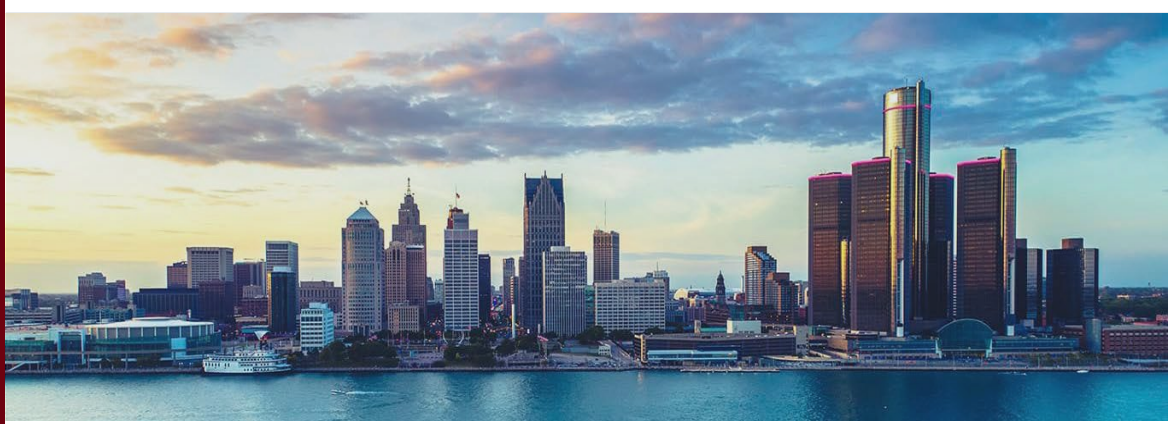




2024 ANNUAL REPORT

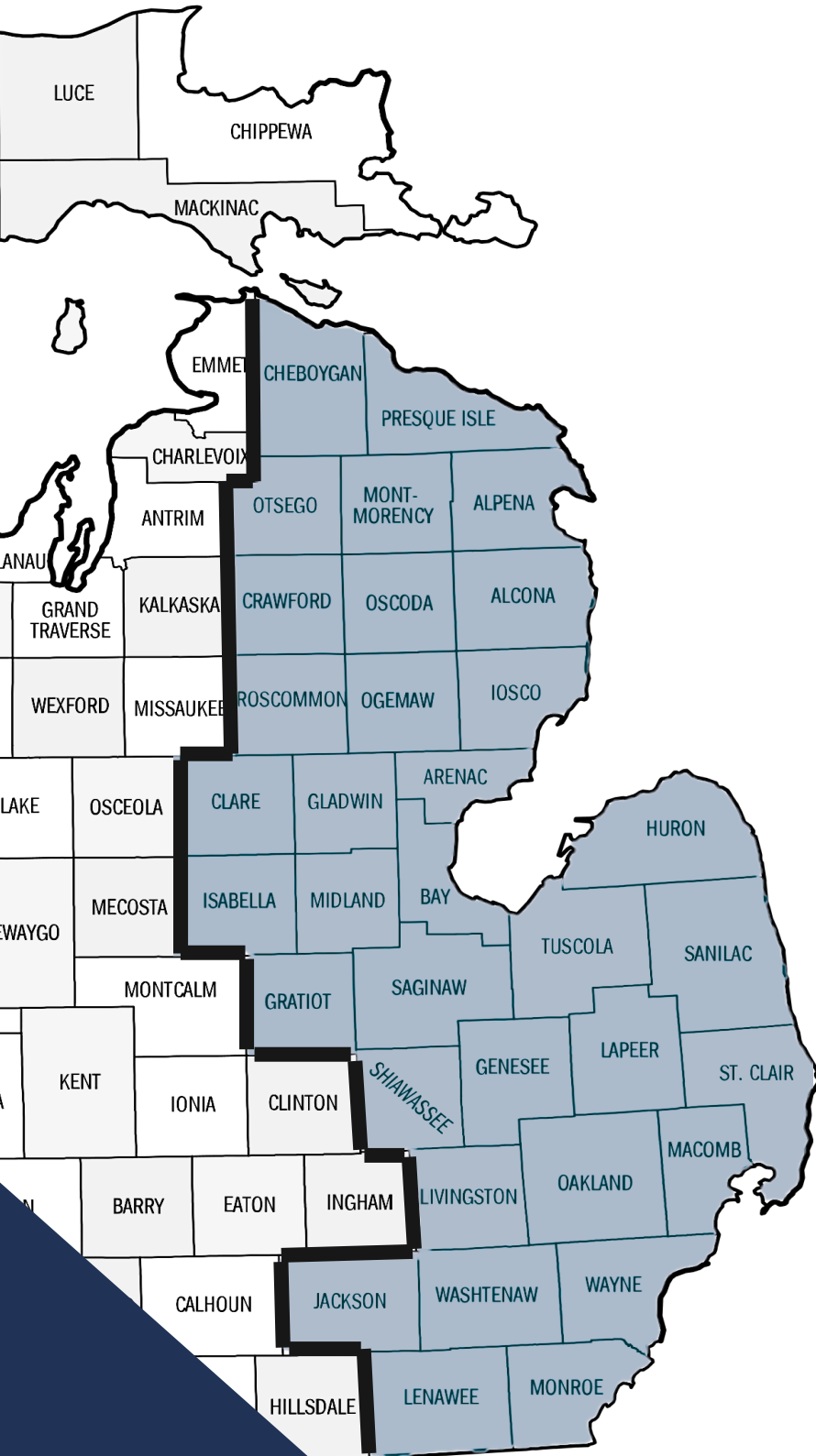


UNITED STATES ATTORNEY' S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

DAWN N. ISON
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY



2024 Annual Report



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 90 support staff.

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In 2024, our efforts to reduce violent crime through our strong partnerships with our community, government, and law enforcement partners continued to bear fruit. We saw reductions in violent crime hit record lows in Detroit. Following the principles we established through our One Detroit Partnership—focus, balance, and fairness—as our guideposts, we have laid the foundation for a true collaboration of public safety in Detroit between law enforcement and community. It is through this shared responsibility for safety that we have accomplished so much. Our community now knows what this type of partnership looks like and what it can achieve.

I salute the extraordinary, dedicated public servants who worked relentlessly to achieve these results and do so much to improve the quality of life for the community we serve.

REBUILDING COMMUNITY TRUST

From the Isabella Reservation in Mt. Pleasant to Flint, Saginaw, Detroit, Jackson and throughout the Eastern District of Michigan, our staff has worked to engage with the residents of the District to make sure every part of our community is connected to our office. We understand that we cannot effectively enforce federal laws without the trust of the various communities that make up this richly, diverse community. Transparency about our work and community engagement builds faith that justice is being administered fairly by a trusted community partner. Our office remains fully engaged in doing what it takes to earn the trust of the communities that we serve throughout the Eastern District of Michigan.

REINVIGORATING OUR PROTECTION OF CIVIL RIGHTS

The Justice Department's first mission in the wake of the Civil War, was to protect civil rights and enshrine equality under the law. Our office continues to carry out that mission through civil and criminal civil rights enforcement and education. As part of the Department of Justice's United Against Hate Initiative, our Civil Rights attorneys along with our DOJ partners from the FBI and the Community Relations Service taught more than 1000 residents about how to identify, report, and prevent hate crimes and bias incidents in more than ten United Against Hate events across our District. In addition, our Civil Rights Unit achieved important settlements that protected the

rights of inmates with disabilities, secured access to health care for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and stopped sexual misconduct by landlords. Similarly, our Public Corruption and Civil Rights Unit continued its work to prosecute hate crimes and threats.

RESTRUCTURING OUR APPROACH TO VIOLENT CRIME

This year marked the second year of our violence reduction strategy, One Eastern District of Michigan or One EDMI, which is the U.S. Attorney's Office's comprehensive initiative for reducing violent crime throughout the District. It is designed to identify evidence-based strategies that have proven effective in reducing violent crime and bring together a coalition of community, government, and law enforcement stakeholders to implement those strategies.

In April 2023, we announced the creation of the first One EDMI subgroup, One Detroit. We relied on evidence-based strategies and partnered with stakeholders in the community, government, and law enforcement to lower the rate of violent crime. As a result Assistant United States Attorneys (AUSAs) were able to focus their efforts on the true 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, with the goal of balancing law enforcement strategies with prevention and outreach to deter future violence. We also committed to being transparent about our work and its outcomes so that the community would commit to this effort with a renewed confidence in the fairness of our approach. Our goal with One Detroit is ambitious: we set our sights on cutting gun violence in half in the District's largest city. And since One Detroit's inception, and reflected in this annual report, we have made significant progress in achieving that goal.

In addition, this year, we expanded our One EDMI efforts outside of Detroit. In Flint, we hosted our first community roundtable as part of our One Flint Violence Reduction Partnership. The event modeled on the successful events in Detroit matched individuals on probation in Flint with more than a dozen resource providers in order to use government and community resources to help encourage successful reentry for justice-impacted citizens. Similarly, our office partnered with the Michigan Department of Corrections and the City of Jackson's Group Violence Intervention program to inform individuals involved in violence in that community about likely consequences for future violence as well as resources if they are interested in changing their lives.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2024

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 2024, our office collected \$45,395,510.25 in criminal and civil actions. Of this amount, \$32,629,919.83 was collected in criminal actions and

\$12,765,590.42 was collected in civil actions. 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 obtained a life sentence for the leader of the Seven Mile Bloods Gang who terrorized Detroit's east side for many years. We also obtained Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations ("RICO") convictions for three senior members of the Almighty Vice Lords Nation, a criminal enterprise that operates across the country, including in Detroit. One of the three defendants was sentenced to 70 years in prison while the other two each received 60-year sentences.
- We reached a landmark settlement agreement with the Wayne County Jail resolving allegations that the Wayne County Jail routinely failed to provide crucial services to inmates with disabilities, including access to appropriate prescription medications, mental health services and medical equipment, and failed to conduct medical and mental health assessments.
- We obtained a guilty plea from the former Chief Financial Officer of the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy who had embezzled more than 40 million dollars from the nonprofit. We also obtained a restitution agreement requiring him to pay no less than \$44.3 million in restitution as a result of his conduct.
- We remained committed to rooting out public corruption in our community as 2024 saw the Mayor of Inkster plead guilty to bribery charges and the Mayor of Taylor sentenced to nearly 6 years in prison on charges of conspiracy to receive bribes and wire fraud.
- We charged five Chinese nationals, who were students at the University of Michigan, with conspiracy, false statements, and destruction of records in a federal investigation after they were caught photographing military equipment during a joint training exercise involving the Michigan National Guard and the Taiwanese military at Camp Grayling, a U.S. military installation.
- We obtained a 33-year sentence for an incident that took place on the Isabella Reservation in Indian Country where the defendant shot and killed his domestic partner and caused life-threatening injuries to a six-month-old child.

- We convicted seven individuals for violating the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act by using physical obstruction to intimidate and interfere with employees and patients of a reproductive health clinic.

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



2024 Executive Team: L-R, Executive AUSA Luttrell Levingston, Criminal Chief Daniel Hurley, United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison, First AUSA Julie Beck, Appellate Chief Jessica Currie, and Civil Chief Kevin Erskine

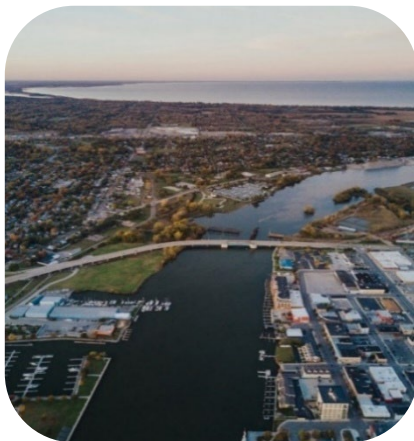
THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

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 nearly four and a half million in its metropolitan area. Other large cities include Ann Arbor, Bay City, Flint, and Saginaw.

The U.S. Attorney's Office is headquartered in Detroit, with staffed branch offices in Bay City and Flint. In 2024 the office had approximately 210 employees, including 120 attorneys. Detroit is the USAO's largest office, with 111 Assistant U.S. Attorneys ("AUSA") and 90 support staff employees, as well as most of the office's administrative personnel. The Bay City office has 4 AUSAs and 5 support professionals. The Flint branch office has 5 AUSAs assigned, along with 3 support professionals. The Branch Chief, a supervisory legal assistant, and a legal administrative specialist travel between the two offices.



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.

Economic crime threats in the District include corporate criminal misconduct, labor racketeering and corruption, large-scale identity theft rings and federal program fraud. The U.S. Attorney's Office also handles Indian Country cases from the Saginaw Chippewa Reservation.



Flint, Michigan

REBUILDING COMMUNITY TRUST

To meet our goal of rebuilding community trust, 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 also included transparency about our work and the outcomes of 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.

We also continued our longstanding work 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. Some of that active community outreach and engagement includes the following:

COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN 2024

In March 2024, a small group of Detroit residents attended the first One Detroit Barbershop Public Safety Forum presented by United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison, Detroit Deputy Mayor Todd Bettison, and Detroit Police Chief James White. The event, held at Emani's Barber and Beauty Shop in Detroit, consisted of an intimate discussion between community residents and Chief White, Deputy Mayor Bettison, and U.S. Attorney Ison and was moderated by Luttrell Levingston, Executive Assistant United States Attorney. The goal of the forum was for community members to share their opinions about violent crime in Detroit and police and community relations.



Attendees at Emani's Barber and Beauty Shop for the first One Detroit barbershop forum.

UNITED AGAINST HATE

Our outreach efforts also included United Against Hate (U.A.H.) community forums which are designed to educate the public about civil rights enforcement tools available to address hate crimes, bias incidents, and discrimination. Forums were held in Port Huron and Detroit. To date, our office has trained more than 800 community members how to identify, report, and help prevent hate crimes in 10 events across the District as part of the United Against Hate Initiative.



Community Relations Service Specialist Sean Fisher, FBI Special Agent, and FBI Intelligence Analyst Nishawn Spiller participate at the United Against Hate (UAH) event that focused on protecting places of worship held at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Detroit.



AUSA Sunita Doddamani, Wayne County Prosecutor Nicole Clay, and Assistant Attorney General Criminal Division Chief Robyn Liddell educate attendees about hate crimes at Protecting Places of Worship UAH event.



The U.A.H. Team presented the UAH presentation as part of NAACP- Detroit Branch Career Day. The entire day's program included a UAH presentation, an address for the high school students from U.S.A. Ison, and three justice-related career panels that included USAO staff.



We brought the U.A.H. program to St. Clair County. Our office partnered with St. Clair County Organizing for Racial Equity to train community members about recognizing and reporting hate crimes and bias incidents at the Port Huron Municipal Complex.

MORE COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT



U.S. Attorney Ison and other law enforcement partners attend Islamic Center of Detroit annual Ramadan Law Enforcement Iftar Dinner.

Our community outreach extended throughout the District.

We enjoyed breaking the fast with so many of our Muslim community members, partners, friends, and other faith leaders.



U. S. Attorney Ison engages with Michigan Muslim Community Council, World Peach Outreach at its Interfaith Iftar Dinner.

And we reached out and engaged with many other groups, organizations, law enforcement partners, everyday citizens, and our tribal community.



Branch Offices staff participate in the "Zoo in the Park" event with Isabella County Child Advocacy Center in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. L-R: Tribal Victim Assistance Specialist Erin Gauthier (Bay City), and Legal Administrative Specialists Jennifer Streeter (Bay City) and Jessica Stanton (Flint).



U.S. Attorney Ison addresses group at the Anti-Defamation League Law Enforcement Consortium.



Citizen Matt Winick visited the office at U.S. Attorney Ison's invitation in her response to a letter he wrote her expressing his appreciation for the office's work protecting civil rights.



U.S. Attorney Ison updates the community about USAO's law enforcement efforts to reduce violent crime at Detroit Police 11th Precinct Community Relations Council.

COMMUNITY INVESTING IN COMMUNITY



U. S Attorney Ison, Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney Luttrell Levingston visit with Mama Shu at Avalon Village.

Shamayim “Mama Shu” Harris is the founder and CEO of Avalon Village, a non-profit organization dedicated to revitalizing a block in Highland Park, Michigan that offers support to the community by transforming vacant and abandoned lots and structures into a sustainable community on Avalon Street. Her mission to turn “blight to beauty” came after losing her 2-year-old son Jakobi Ra in a hit-and-run accident in 2007. In 2021, another tragedy struck when Mama Shu’s other son, Chinyelu was murdered. A “Homework House” in Avalon Village is dedicated to Jakobi Ra and a garden to Chinyelu.

Mama Shu has dedicated her life to serving the people in her community and US. Attorney Ison and Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney Luttrell Levingston were honored to have had the opportunity to visit with Mama Shu.



U.S. Attorney Ison addresses campers at Mama Shu's Hood Camp.

During another visit, U.S. Attorney particularly appreciated engaging with youth at “Mama Shu’s Hood Camp,” which provides an outdoor camping event for youth within their own neighborhood, empowering local youth by providing them practical skills and connecting them to their surroundings.



Outdoor scene at Mam Shu's Hood Camp.



The Homework House named in memory of Mama Shu's 2-year-old son Jakobi Ra, who was killed in a hit-and-run accident.



Mama Shu and U.S. Attorney Ison stand within Avalon Village's "Invincible Gardens," planted in memory of Mama Shu's son Chinyelu, who was murdered in 2021.

INDIAN COUNTRY

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, Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney Luttrell Livingston and Outreach Specialist Mitchell tour the Saginaw Chippewa Trial Court in Mt. Pleasant.



Executive AUSA Livingston, AUSA Roy Kranz, Outreach Specialist Mitchell Kittle, and Tribal Victim Assistance Specialist Erin Gauthier learn about Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribal Court.



U.S. Attorney Ison and Tribal Victim Assistance Witness Specialist Erin Gauthier and Victim Witness Specialist Alex Wyatt tour the Saginaw Chippewa Trial Court courtroom and learn more about the cases handled there from Tribal Magistrate Carol Jackson.



U.S. Attorney Ison and staff and Tribal Magistrate Carol Jackson and court staff in front of mural displayed in Saginaw Chippewa Trial Court courtroom.

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

As part of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, U.S. Attorney Ison, along with the Detroit Crime Victims' Action Team and Detroit Police Department's Major Crime Unit, recognized crime victims and those who serve and assist them. The 2024 National Victims' Rights Week theme was "How Would You Help?-Options, Services and Hope for Crime Survivors." Detroit Crime Victim's Action Team 2024 honored the SafeHouse Center, a domestic abuse treatment center, whose mission "is to empower survivors of both sexual and intimate partner violence by providing advocacy, support, and promoting social change within our community."



Detroit Crime Victims' Action Team's 2024 National Crime Victims' Rights Week honoree, SafeHouse Center L-Executive Director Christine Watson and



L-R: Victim Witness Specialist Sherri Holloway, U.S. Attorney Ison, and Victim/Witness Specialist Alexandra Wyatt.

U.S. Attorney Ison and USAO's Victim Witness Specialist also supported Detroit Police Department's Major Crimes Unit's hosted a National Crime Victims' Rights Week's Fair and Walk to raise awareness about rights of crime victims and to provide resources to help support victims of crimes.



Victim Witness Specialist Sherri Holloway shares information about our office's victim witness program and other resources at DPD's National Crime Victims' Week program.



Attendees gather at DPD's National Crime Victims' Week Fair and Walk.

ENGAGING WITH YOUTH



Pulaski Teacher Mrs. Wilma Muhammad and U.S. Attorney Ison at the Mock Trial in the Federal Courthouse.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan is committed to educating youth on the dangers and consequences of their actions. As part of our prevention outreach efforts, this past school year, the Office partnered with the Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) to introduce Project LEAD (Legal Enrichment and Decision-Making) to elementary school children. Project LEAD provides a curriculum that focuses on the legal and social consequences of juvenile crimes, such as truancy, illicit drug use, and shoplifting, and was introduced at two elementary schools in the city of Detroit this past school year. Additionally, the program focuses on teaching students techniques for resolving conflict, resisting peer pressure, promoting tolerance, respect for diversity, and achieving economic stability. The program concludes with students performing a mock trial and putting into practice what they have learned about the criminal justice system.

"It was an honor to participate in Project LEAD this school year. I saw my students come alive and participate in a capacity that allowed them to connect school and real-life situations. They learned a lot about the justice system as they practiced reading and writing skills. The field trip to the courthouse was the ultimate prize, and one I know my students will probably never forget. I am looking forward to participating in Project LEAD next school year," said Wilma Muhammad, 4th and 5th grade English and Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher at Pulaski Elementary.



L-R: AUSAs Jasmine Moore and Nhan Ho teach the Project LEAD curriculum to Bow Middle School students.



Students from the 9th precinct Pulaski Elementary conducted Project LEAD's culminating activity: the Mock trial at the



Students from the 8th Precinct's Bow Elementary conduct Project LEAD's culminating activity: the Mock trial at the Federal

We also actively engaged with high school, undergraduate, and law school students throughout the year. USAO staff met with and presented to youth in the District in an effort to foster their interest in the legal field.

In recognition of Law Day, United States Attorney Ison spoke with local high school students about a rewarding career as an Assistant United States Attorney representing the United States.



Assistant U.S. Attorney Nhan Ho, U.S. Attorney Ison, Assistant U.S. Attorneys Susan Fairchild and Darrin Crawford participate in Law Day at the United States District Court



U.S. Attorney Dawn N. Ison speaks with high school students during Law Day in the Federal Courthouse.



U.S. Attorney Ison and USAO staff talks with students at NAACP Career Day Events and spoke about their rewarding careers.



U.S. Attorney Ison and Deputy Mayor Todd Bettison address students from 13 Detroit high schools at the Detroit Violence Prevention Initiative Youth Conference at Marygrove College, an initiative supported through a grant from DOJ Justice Programs.



U.S. Attorney Ison addressed first-year law students at Michigan State University on a "Professionalism in Action" panel, along with (L-R) State Bar President Daniel Quick, Attorney Michale Lieb and Federal Magistrate Judge Curtis Ivy. MSU Law School Dean Sant'Ambrogio (center).

ENGAGING WITH SENIORS

The United States Attorney's Office and the Dearborn Police Department, along with the Postal Inspection Service and the FBI came together to increase public awareness about crimes targeting seniors in our community and to offer advice on how seniors can protect themselves from financial loss and fraud schemes.



L-R U.S. Postal Inspection agents Andrew Brandsasse, James Van de Putte, FBI Agent Matthew Sluss, U.S. Attorney Ison, Dearborn Police Cadets, AUSA Ryan Particka, Postal Inspector in Charge Rodney Hopkins, and Dearborn Police Commander Andrew Zelazny at Elder Fraud Town Hall at Henry Ford Centennial Library in Dearborn.

ENFORCEMENT

CIVIL RIGHTS



USAO Legal Assistant Molly Anderson, Michigan State Police Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer Sarah Krebs, AUSA Shannon Ackenhause, USAO Investigator Lori Bates, USAO Victim Witness Specialist Alex Wyatt, AUSAs Sunita Doddamani, AUSA Nils Kessler (Western District of Michigan), Nedra

Fair Housing. In *United States v. Hussein*, our office secured an agreement in a sexual harassment lawsuit against a Michigan rental property owner, Mohamad Hussein. Hussein agreed to pay \$185,000 in damages and a civil penalty to the government to resolve a Fair Housing Act (FHA) lawsuit concerning Hussein's sexual harassment of actual and prospective female tenants. The lawsuit alleged that Hussein subjected actual and prospective female tenants to sexual harassment by making unwelcome comments and advances and offered actual and prospective female tenants housing-related benefits

in exchange for engaging in sex acts with him. Under the agreement, Hussein will be permanently enjoined from personally managing rental properties in the future and will be required to retain an independent property manager to manage any rental properties he owns. Hussein owned and managed over 15 rental properties in and around Dearborn Heights, Michigan.

Wayne County Jail. Our office reached a landmark settlement agreement with Wayne County to implement reforms at the county jail to address concerns relating to inmates who have disabilities. After receiving numerous complaints, an investigation of the Wayne County Jail was initiated under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The complaints alleged that Wayne County routinely failed to provide crucial services to inmates who have disabilities, including access to appropriate prescription medication, mental health services, and medical equipment. Some complaints alleged a failure to conduct medical and mental health assessments. Eight inmates committed suicide over a thirteen-month period during 2016 and 2017. The settlement agreement requires Wayne County to implement a series of reforms at the Wayne County Jail and provide compliance reports.

McLaren Health Care Corporation. Our Civil Rights Unit reached a settlement with McLaren Health Care Corporation to ensure effective communication at its facilities throughout Michigan. An investigation was initiated under the Americans with Disabilities Act after receiving complaints alleging McLaren had failed to provide auxiliary aids and services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. The settlement agreement requires McLaren to provide auxiliary aids and services free of charge to ensure effective communication with their patients and their companions as well as provide a combined \$220,000 in monetary relief to fourteen affected individuals. McLaren owns and operates multiple hospitals and outpatient health centers throughout the state of Michigan, including through its subsidiary, the Karmanos Cancer Institute. The settlement agreement requires McLaren to provide auxiliary aids and services free of charge to ensure effective communication with their patients and their companions as well as provide a combined \$220,000 in monetary relief to fourteen affected individuals. McLaren owns and operates multiple hospitals and outpatient health centers throughout the state of Michigan, including through its subsidiary, the Karmanos Cancer Institute.

Discrimination in Schools. The Department of Justice and Hartland Consolidated School District entered into a two-year agreement with Hartland Consolidated School District to strengthen Hartland's ongoing response to allegations of student-on-student racial harassment. The agreement extends a prior agreement entered into in July 2022, whereby Hartland agreed to resolve an investigation into student-on-student harassment. The underlying complaint alleged that Hartland failed to address pervasive race-based harassment of black students in the district. Hartland voluntarily agreed to take several steps to address concerns raised during the investigation. The extension agreement builds on Hartland's previous efforts, adding more training for staff to identify and respond to racial harassment. Hartland also agreed to conduct age-appropriate, district-wide training programs for students, focused on preventing racial

harassment and improving the school environment. Hartland further agreed to enhance its logging and response to allegations of racial harassment and to provide supportive measures to any affected students.

CRIMINAL CIVIL RIGHTS

Reproductive Rights. In *United States v. Zastrow*, seven defendants were convicted of federal civil rights offenses arising out of their blockade of a reproductive health care clinic in Sterling Heights, Michigan. The defendants were each convicted of a felony conspiracy against rights and a Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act offense. Two defendants were convicted of a second FACE Act offense arising out of a blockade of a reproductive health care clinic in Saginaw, Michigan. During the blockade, the defendants sat or stood in front of the entrances to the clinic so that patients and employees could not enter. All of the defendants are awaiting sentencing.

Threats. In *United States v. Shapiro*, Michael Shapiro pleaded guilty to charges of repeatedly threatening the Council on American-Islamic Relations (“CAIR”) Michigan Chapter. Shapiro placed three separate phone calls to CAIR’s office located in Canton, Michigan, and left voicemails containing threats to kill Muslims. Shapiro admitted that he intentionally selected CAIR as the victim of his threats because of the actual and perceived religion and national origin of the people who work at and are assisted by CAIR.

In *United States v. Nickels*, Andrew Nickels was sentenced to one year and 2 months in prison for sending a communication that included death threats to an election worker in Michigan shortly after the November 2020 election. Nickels called the clerk of a local municipality and left a voicemail threatening to kill the local official.

PUBLIC CORRUPTION

Eradicating 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, preventing 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 discouraging good people from seeking public office. Our region thrives when we have honest government at every level.

In *United States v. Smith*, William A. Smith, the former Chief Financial Officer for the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, pleaded guilty to federal charges stemming from a years-long scheme to embezzle over \$40 million from the Conservancy. Smith pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud and one count of money laundering. Smith was employed as the Chief Financial Officer for the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, Inc. from 2011 through May 2024. The Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) organization formed with the mission of developing access to the Detroit riverfront. Smith engaged in various practices to cover up and sustain this massive fraud scheme. As part of his plea, Smith agreed to pay no less than \$44.3 million in restitution as a result of his conduct.

City Officials. In *United States v. Sollars*, Richard Sollars was sentenced to nearly 6 years in prison for conspiring to accept bribes and engaging in wire fraud while he was the Mayor of the City of Taylor. Sollars agreed to exercise his authority as the mayor to influence the award of city contracts and fraudulently spent campaign funds for his own personal use. Sollars received bribes totaling \$85,011.73 as part of this bribery scheme. The bribes included items such as home renovations, a humidifier, kitchen appliances, a washer and dryer, a Dyson vacuum cleaner, a camera, and cash. Sollars received \$70,362.98 from wire fraud schemes related to his campaign account.

In *United States v. Wimberly*, Patrick Wimberly, the former Mayor of the City of Inkster, pleaded guilty to bribery. Wimberly demanded \$100,000 in cash payments to facilitate the sale of property owned by the City to an outside party. Over several months, that individual provided Wimberly with monthly cash bribes to secure the purchase of this property. Wimberly faces a maximum sentence of 10 years' in prison and a fine of \$250,000 when he is sentenced next year.

Police Misconduct. In *United States v. Rodriguez*, Matthew Rodriguez, a former Warren, Michigan, police officer was sentenced to one year and one day in prison for using excessive force against an arrestee while fingerprinting and photographing him at a local detention facility. Rodriguez pleaded guilty to one count of deprivation of rights under color of law. In connection with his plea, Rodriguez admitted to writing a report in which he made false statements about the incident and omitted material information in an attempt to cover up his crime.

VIOLENT CRIME CASES

As a result of our focused approach to target the most violent offenders who are harming public safety, through our violent reduction partnerships and other strategies, we have achieved significant results. Improving public safety by focusing on the drivers of violence using evidence-based strategies and including prevention is a significant and critical part of our strategy.

Murder-for-Hire. In *United States v. Hunter*, Reginald Hunter was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his role in a murder-for-hire scheme. In February 2022, an individual hired Hunter and his co-defendant Julius K. Jordan to travel from Alabama to Flint, Michigan, to murder someone in exchange for money. Once Jordan and Hunter arrived in Michigan, they were given assault rifles and immediately began looking for the individual who they were hired to kill. As Jordan and Hunter drove through a neighborhood looking for their intended victim, Jordan failed to stop at a stop sign. Michigan State Police troopers saw Jordan commit the traffic violation and conducted a traffic stop. During the stop, troopers seized a short barrel, semi-automatic rifle with a collapsible stock and a semi-automatic rifle. Both rifles were loaded with chambered rounds and high-capacity magazines. Jordan pleaded guilty and was sentenced to nearly 16 years in prison.

In ***United States v. Williams***, James Williams was convicted at trial of murder-for-hire resulting in death, conspiracy to commit a murder-for-hire resulting in death, and conspiracy to commit murder-for-hire resulting in personal injury. The evidence at trial established that Williams hired others to commit separate murders in 2016. In one incident, Williams also drove the person he hired to the murder scene in Sterling Heights. In the other incident, Williams was contracted to kill an individual in Detroit, but the people he hired shot and injured the wrong target. Williams faces a mandatory life sentence.

Murder and Racketeering. In ***United States v. Arnold***, Billy Arnold, the leader of the Seven Mile Bloods, a violent street gang, was sentenced to life in prison after being convicted of racketeering, murder, and other related firearms offenses. The gang operated on the east side of Detroit, between Gratiot Avenue and Kelly Road and between Seven and Eight Mile Roads. Seven Mile Bloods or “SMB” members claimed this area as their territory and referred to it as the “Red Zone.” The area is in zip code 48205, which SMB members referred to as “4-8-2-0- Die.” The investigation of the SMB resulted in the seizure of more than 20 firearms, including several high-powered assault rifles. Arnold was the 20th member or associate of the Seven Mile Bloods to have been convicted as a result of the investigation and prosecution.

In ***United States v. Douglas***, Terry Douglas, Schuyler Belew, Jr, and Davun Baskerville, three members of the Almighty Vice Lords Nation, were convicted by a jury of a RICO conspiracy that involved a 2020 murder, and other crimes. The Almighty Vice Lords Nation (AVLN) was a sprawling criminal enterprise which committed acts of violence, drug dealing, and other crimes, across the country. The trial involved members of the Traveling Vice Lords branch of the AVLN. The jury found that the three men were responsible for a 2020 murder and attempted murder that took place at the Shirley-Plymouth playground on Detroit’s west side. Davun Baskerville killed a 29-year-old man, in broad daylight in front of his two young children. Baskerville also shot and injured the children’s pregnant mother, who had witnessed the murder. Terry Douglas and Schuyler Belew, Jr., aided and abetted the murder. A fourth man, Lawon Carter, was convicted of drug and gun charges. Douglas and Belew were both sentenced to 60 years in prison. Baskerville was sentenced to 70 years in prison.

Kidnapping/Carjacking. In ***United States v. Blake et al.***, Cortez Blake and Nasir Lewis, along with others, were convicted on charges relating to the kidnapping and beating of a victim they mistakenly thought took part in a carjacking. The kidnapping was in retaliation and to extract information from the victim. A group of armed men took the victim from Sinai-Grace Hospital and drove her to an empty lot in Detroit where they beat her. The kidnappers then took the victim to a residence controlled by Blake, where the victim was held at gunpoint and beaten intermittently for hours. Finally, the victim was abandoned miles away on the roadside. Blake was sentenced to over 16 years in prison. In addition to Blake and Lewis being convicted by a jury, Maijah Greene, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to kidnap; Shatonna Kimbrough and Armond Williams pleaded guilty to kidnapping. The trial of a sixth individual, Semaj Ayers, remains

pending. Two additional people were convicted of the carjacking that precipitated the kidnapping. Jamar Lee-Stinson pleaded guilty to carjacking and discharging a firearm during a crime of violence and was sentenced to 11 years and 9 months and Amiaya Bryant also pleaded guilty to carjacking and discharging a firearm during a crime of violence and was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Armond Williams and Maijah Greene were sentenced to 8 years in prison for their role in the kidnapping.

HOBBS Act Robbery. In *United States v. Kukola*, Kristopher Kukola was sentenced to 5 years and 3 months in prison for robbing several CVS pharmacies in Van Buren Township, Saline and Milan Michigan. During the robberies, Kukola would present the victims with a list of medications and demand that an employee give him everything on the list. He would display what appeared to be a black handgun and demanded that the victims lay on the floor. During Kukola's final robbery of a CVS in Milan, he handed an employee a list of prescription pills. But this time, the employee placed a decoy pill bottle with GPS tracking into Kukola's bag. The tracking device allowed law enforcement to follow Kukola, and ultimately led to his arrest.

In *United States v. Jackson*, Mario Keeream Jackson was sentenced to 28 years in prison following his convictions for the armed robberies and attempted armed robbery of five Walgreens in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties in 2018 and 2019. Jackson, who at the time of the robberies was on parole with the Michigan Department of Corrections for a prior firearm conviction, used a semi-automatic handgun with an extended magazine during the robberies. Jackson stole over \$18,000 in cash and over 5000 prescription opioid pills. During all the robberies, Jackson gained access to the back area of the stores by crawling through the coolers located in the stores. In total, Jackson held nine Walgreens employees at gunpoint during the robberies.

Assault on Federal Agents. In *United States v. Bush*, Gloria Bush was sentenced to 7 years in prison after having pleaded guilty to assaulting a federal officer and using and carrying a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence. When agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration Special Response Team attempted to execute a search warrant at Bush's residence, Bush fired two shots in their direction from inside the house. One bullet struck a shield that one of the agents was holding.

In *United States v. Emerson*, Carl Emerson Travis was indicted by a federal grand jury with seven counts of aggravated assault on three deputy U.S. Marshals and four federal task force officers. Members of the U.S. Marshals Fugitive Apprehension Team attempted to arrest Carl Emerson Travis, who was wanted in multiple jurisdictions. When Travis saw law enforcement approaching, he resisted arrest and tried to escape, accelerating his car in reverse at a high rate of speed. In the process, Travis dragged a deputy U.S. Marshal and a task force officer with his car and knocked another officer to the ground. As Travis's vehicle flew backwards, it also nearly struck other several other deputies and officers who stood nearby. Travis ultimately slammed into a

parked car, pushing it through the wall of an occupied hotel room. Only then was Travis finally placed under arrest. Emerson is currently awaiting trial.

In ***United States v. Gray***, Tyjuan Gray was sentenced to 10 years in prison for assaulting, strangling, and injuring a nurse practitioner in a federal detention facility. Gray was an inmate at FCI Milan and attacked a nurse during a routine medical visit. Gray grabbed the nurse's throat, hitting her head against the wall. Gray held the nurse's wrists so that she was unable to radio for help or defend herself. When the victim fell to the floor, Gray kned her in the stomach while restraining her and strangling her. Just as she was nearing unconsciousness, another inmate pulled Gray off the victim, allowing her to activate her alarm. Afterwards, the victim required medical treatment from the effects of strangulation.

INDIAN COUNTRY

In ***United States v. Johnson***, Michael Lee Johnson was convicted for assault and strangulation of his then girlfriend on the Isabella Indian Reservation. Johnson was found guilty of several counts arising out of the assault and strangulation of the victim in this case, including unlawful in prison, assault of a dating partner by strangulation, assault of a dating partner by suffocation, domestic violence, and numerous instances of witness tampering. Johnson is awaiting sentencing.

In ***United States v. Ashford***, Jonathan Ashford was sentenced to over 33 years in prison for murder and other assaultive crimes. Ashford pleaded guilty to murder, assault with intent to murder, and discharge of a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence. After having an argument with his significant other, Ashford retrieved a 9mm Taurus handgun and shot his significant other multiple times, killing her. Several of the bullets Ashford fired struck a 6-month-old child who his significant other was holding in her arms when he shot her. The baby suffered life threatening injuries, but survived. Both victims are Indians, and the incident occurred on the Isabella Reservation within Indian country.

FIREARMS/STRAW PURCHASERS/CONVERSION DEVICES

We continued to combat gun violence not just by keeping guns out of the hands of convicted felons, but also the straw purchasers who knowingly place illegally purchased firearms in the hands of criminals.

In ***United States v. Chauncey Williams, et al***, Chauncey Williams, Antonio Jackson, and Mike Chahoua were leaders of a scheme to use stolen credit card information to buy firearms online, which were then shipped to local firearm retailers for pickup. The leaders enlisted several straw purchasers to pick up firearms. To get the firearms, the straw purchasers were directed to lie on the required ATF paperwork. In total, the group illegally obtained at least 55 firearms through the scheme. Several of the firearms have been recovered by law enforcement, including in the hands of convicted felons. All nine defendants have been sentenced. Sentences ranged from 94 months to 30 months in prison.

In ***United States v. Ruemondo Murray, et al.*** Ruemondo Murray was sentenced to 4 years and 4 months' in prison for directing a conspiracy to straw purchase firearms. Six women involved in that conspiracy purchased a total of 24 firearms on behalf of Murray from multiple federally licensed firearms dealers in metro Detroit. When the women made the purchases, they falsely affirmed on federal firearms purchase documents that they were the actual buyer of the firearms, when in fact, they were purchasing them for Murray. Murray is prohibited from possessing firearms due to his previous felony convictions of robbery and felony firearm. In total, the group illegally obtained at least 24 firearms.

Machinegun Conversion Devices. As part of our violent crime reduction strategy, we focused on the rising threat posed by illegal machinegun conversion devices, also known as “switches” or “auto sears”. A conversion device can be attached to a handgun, converting it into a fully automatic machine gun.

In ***United States v. Hairston***, Yusef Hairston was sentenced to 4 years and 9 months in prison for illegally importing and selling machinegun conversion devices. Over the course of several months, Hairston sold undercover ATF agents over 60 machinegun conversion devices. During this same time, Homeland Security Investigations and Customs and Border Patrol interdicted two shipments from China containing over 100 machinegun conversion devices destined for Hairston. In total, Hairston was held responsible for possessing, importing, and selling over 200 machinegun conversion devices.

In ***United States v. Woods***, Kanye Woods pled guilty to felon in possession of a firearm for possessing a firearm equipped with a machinegun conversion device. Woods, a member of the Omerta Boyz gang, was captured on surveillance video carrying the weapon outside his house before ATF raided and recovered the firearm. NIBIN testing linked the firearm to multiple non-fatal shootings, and Woods's Instagram account revealed incriminating statements and photos of Woods around the time of some of those shootings. Sentencing is scheduled for March 24, 2025.

In ***United States v. Hunter***, Deon Hunter pleaded guilty to charges of illegal possession of a machinegun and aggravated identity theft. Detroit Police arrested Hunter, a member of the Omerta Boyz gang, after a traffic stop. Hunter had a firearm equipped with a machinegun conversion device inside his jacket. Officers also found a video of Hunter firing a similar looking machinegun on Youtube that was deleted shortly after his arrest. NIBIN testing linked Hunter's machinegun to a homicide and multiple non-fatal shootings involving rival gang members. The series of shootings were committed after the video was uploaded to Youtube, but before Hunter was arrested with the machinegun.

DRUG TRAFFICKING

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. Delgado***, Ricardo Delgado was sentenced to 60 years in prison for being the leader of a large-scale drug conspiracy that involved the importation of numerous kilograms of cocaine and fentanyl from Mexico for distribution in the Saginaw-Bay region. FBI agents learned from a court-authorized wiretap that Delgado was seeking retaliation for the theft of his drugs from a subordinate and that he ordered that subordinate to exact revenge. However, this plan was thwarted by authorities. Following Delgado's arrest, law enforcement officers seized 13 kilograms of cocaine, two kilograms of fentanyl, 12 firearms, including two machineguns, two silencers, and over \$200,000 in cash from Delgado's residence.



2mg of fentanyl, the amount on the tip of this pencil, is enough to kill.

In ***United States v. Hitchcock***, Reginald Hitchcock was sentenced to 15 years in prison after having been convicted of possessing more than 40 grams of fentanyl and more than 500 grams of cocaine with the intent to distribute them as well as possessing ammunition after being convicted of a felony. Hitchcock was selling drugs out of his house and car on Detroit's west side.

In ***United States v. Demond Johns, et al***, several members of the Thoroughbread Family (TBF) pleaded guilty to a drug conspiracy and were sentenced to prison in 2024. TBF was a violent street gang in Jackson that engaged in violence and trafficked a unique form of rock-like fentanyl, (often referred to as "Poogi dope" in honor of the leader of the gang, Tamarius "Poogi" Faulkner). The investigation revealed an extensive fentanyl trafficking network in Jackson, the movement of guns between members of the gang, and acts of violence by the gang. One of the leaders, Demond Johns, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute fentanyl, and was sentenced to 10 years and 8 months in prison. Five other members pleaded guilty and were sentenced from 5 years to just over 10 years in prison.

In ***United States v. Lampkin***, Robert Lampkin was sentenced to 15 years in prison for leading a drug organization that trafficked methamphetamine across the country. Lampkin purchased over 9 kilograms of methamphetamine from a supplier in California that Lampkin's codefendants JoShawn Bennett, Tiffany Stockman, and Tammie Wade brought back to Michigan in airline luggage. Lampkin and another codefendant, Brenden Lockridge, separately used stolen personal identifying information of other individuals to file fraudulent claims for pandemic unemployment assistance in multiple states. Lampkin's and Lockridge's sentences also require them to pay back the \$2.1 million stolen from multiple states as restitution.

In ***United States v. Bell***, Darrick Bell, the leader of a large-scale drug conspiracy that operated out of the former Victory Inn hotel in Dearborn, Michigan, was sentenced to 28 years in prison based on his conviction on drug trafficking charges. Bell sold drugs to vulnerable women to control them and used them to keep drug customers coming to the Victory Inn. Bell turned the Victory Inn into his own drug distribution business by gaining control of rooms at the hotel and moving his drug-dealing co-conspirators onto the premises. Bell employed drug dealers and enforcers to use manipulation, drugs, and violence to control the Victory Inn. The investigation of this case resulted in 9 individuals being charged with various drug and sex trafficking offenses and sentenced to over 116 years collectively.

In ***United States v. Mitchell***, Antonio Mitchell was sentenced to 12 ½ years in prison for his role in an armed drug conspiracy that amassed nearly 200 pounds of methamphetamine and other controlled substances. Agents learned through their investigation that co-defendant Keith Haskins had been mailing kilograms of methamphetamine, fentanyl, and cocaine from California to his associate in Detroit, Kennie Smith. Federal agents intercepted several of these parcels, many of which contained drugs packaged inside of plastic buckets from a hardware store chain. Mitchell assisted with transporting drugs and drug proceeds between the southwestern United States and Michigan. Haskins was previously sentenced to 18 years in prison. Smith was sentenced to over 10 years in prison. The fourth defendant, Chalisa Sawyer, is awaiting trial set for January 2025.

Delivery Causing Death. In ***United States v. Porter-Craig***, Aerial Porter-Craig was charged with distributing drugs laced with fentanyl that killed three Grosse Pointe Woods residents. Porter-Craig had regularly sold drugs to the three victims prior to the fatal incident. Text messages between Porter-Craig and the victims indicate that the victims thought they were buying cocaine. The Wayne County Medical Examiner determined that two of the victims died from fentanyl toxicity, and the third died from fentanyl and xylazine toxicity. Xylazine is an animal tranquilizer unsafe for human consumption but is sometimes mixed with fentanyl by drug traffickers.

In ***United States v. Triplett***, Melvin Lamar Triplett was convicted of distributing crack cocaine and fentanyl, resulting in the deaths of two individuals and causing serious bodily injury to another. He was also convicted of conspiracy to distribute and possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine and fentanyl. Evidence at trial showed Triplett distributed fentanyl-laced crack cocaine that caused the overdoses. DEA investigators traced the lethal drugs back to Triplett, a previously convicted drug dealer.



U.S. Attorney Ison and AUSA Maggie Smith address families who have lost loved ones to drug overdoses about our prosecution of cases involving delivery causing death at a DEA Family Summit event.

International Drug Trafficking. In *United States v. Sychantha*, Khaophone Sychantha, a dual citizen of Laos and Canada, was convicted of drug trafficking charges involving the distribution of methamphetamine, ecstasy, and BZP. Sychantha led an organization that directed several couriers to transport hundreds of thousands of pills and tens of thousands of dollars in drug proceeds across the United States-Canada border over an eight-year span. His couriers—many of whom were caught and convicted themselves—traveled to multiple states to deliver the pills. Prior to Sychantha’s extradition to the United States, he fled house arrest in Canada and HSI Detroit added him to the Homeland Security Investigations’ Ten Most Wanted List. He was subsequently arrested in the Montreal, Canada area in 2017 following an assault on a police officer and a short pursuit.

In *United States v. Hernandez et al*, Victor Hernandez ran a dark web vendor site under the moniker “opiateconnect,” selling illicit scheduled drugs, including cocaine, and various counterfeit drugs. These counterfeit pills were made to look like alprazolam (Xanax) but were in fact uncontrolled research chemicals not scheduled for human consumption. Search warrants were executed at Hernandez’s house in Detroit, where agents discovered a clandestine drug lab capable of producing upwards of 20,000 pills per hour. They also found around three firearms, a “tub” containing approximately 600 grams of cocaine, thousands of pressed counterfeit alprazolam pills, \$340,000 in cash, and more than \$1 million in cryptocurrency. Hernandez was sentenced to 10 years and 10 months in prison. Hernandez’s sister, Carolyn Hernandez-Taylor, also pleaded guilty in the case and was sentenced to 5 years in prison.

Prescription pills/opioids. In *United States v. Sherman*, Lawrence Mark Sherman, a physician, was sentenced to 12 years in prison based on his conviction following a jury trial on 20 charges related to the unlawful diversion of prescription drugs. The charges on which he was convicted and sentenced stemmed from his involvement in the operation of Tranquility Wellness Center, Inc. where he unlawfully prescribed primarily Oxycodone, Oxymorphone, and Oxycodone-Acetaminophen 10- (Percocet), three of the most addictive prescription opioids. These prescription



Oxycodone tablets

drugs are also among the most highly diverted prescription opioids due to their high street value. Sherman issued more than 270,000 dosage units of Schedule II opioid prescriptions during the conspiracy. These controlled substances had a street value more than \$6.3 million.

In *United States v. Shelton*, Dr. Bernard Shelton was sentenced to 30 years in prison after being convicted at trial of a patient’s overdose death that resulted from his unlawful prescribing. He was also convicted on twenty-one charges related to the unlawful distribution of Schedule II, III and IV prescription drug-controlled substances. Shelton ran a pill where he prescribed over 5.5 million doses of controlled substances over a three-year period. Shelton issued prescriptions to patients outside the usual course of professional practice and for no legitimate medical purpose

so he could charge for office visits and tests. Shelton received over \$1.4 million from Medicare, Medicaid, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan during the same time-period.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND CHILD EXPLOITATION

Human trafficking and child exploitation involve the exploitation of our most vulnerable citizens. Our office remains committed to investigating and prosecuting these important cases.

In ***United States v. McCallum***, Jeremy McCallum was sentenced to 85 years in prison for sexually exploiting children. In January 2020, law enforcement searched McCallum's home for child sexually abusive material. The search resulted in the recovery of hard copies and digital files depicting years-long, horrific sexual abuse of three minor children by McCallum. McCallum abused one minor female for the better part of a decade, documenting his abuse of her on VHS tape, on his cell phone, and in Polaroid pictures. He abused another minor female when she was an infant, recording his sexual abuse of her on VHS tape and on his cell phone. Finally, on a VHS tape, an FBI agent located an instance of sexual abuse that McCallum committed against a minor male.

In ***United States v. Dennison***, Glenn Dennison was sentenced to 60 years in prison today for sexually exploiting multiple children. Dennison pleaded guilty to filming himself violently sexually assaulting three minor children who were all under the age of 10 years old. The youngest was just 2 years old when the abuse started. Dennison's sexual assaults came to light when he posted images of child sexual abuse material on a public website. During a search warrant at Dennison's Novi home, agents found his cellphone, which contained multiple files of Dennison's horrific sexual abuse of the three children.

In ***United States v. Sabb-Visga***, Austin Ray Sabb-Visga and Todd Allen Sabb-Visga were each sentenced to 50 years in prison for sexually exploiting children. The Sabb-Visgas sexually exploited children entrusted to their care and videotaped their abuse. Austin Sabb-Visga also distributed videos of the abuse to Todd Sabb-Visga and others. In June 2023, Michigan State Police and the United States Secret Service were alerted to the Sabb-Visgas' crimes after a tipster informed the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children that Austin Sabb-Visga sent an image of child pornography. Law enforcement executed a search warrant at the Sabb-Visgas' home, seizing several cell phones. Forensic examination of the devices revealed the prolific abuse of one child over the course of at least a year and the exploitation of at least two other children.

In ***United States v. Martin***, Colin Clemente Martin was sentenced to 40 years in prison on charges of coercion and enticement of a minor and the sexual exploitation of a minor. Martin posed as a female talent scout on the internet application Musical.ly. After gaining the trust of his young victims, he forced them to engage in sexual and other horrific acts to create videos and images for his own pleasure and gratification. If the victims asked to stop doing what Martin demanded, he threatened to share the videos and images with the victims' friends. Martin victimized at least

eight identified minors. Martin was finally stopped thanks to the bravery of his victims, several of whom reported what happened to authorities in Illinois, Ohio, and Toronto, Canada.

In ***United States v. Ninsawat***, Nopphadon Ninsawat was sentenced to 15 years for sexually exploiting a child, coercion and enticement of a minor, and receipt of child pornography. Ninsawat met a 15-year-old victim on Snapchat. After they communicated for some time, the victim's mother discovered the communications, contacted the defendant, and told him that her daughter was 15-years old. Ninsawat agreed not to have further contact with her but instead, he resumed requesting that the child produce sexually explicit images, even though she indicated that she no longer wanted to do so. As a result of Ninsawat's persistence, the victim eventually produced numerous images of herself engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

In ***United States v. Phelps***, Rex Phelps was sentenced to 2 years in prison for abusive sexual contact with a child. While providing flying lessons to a 15-year-old girl, Phelps groomed and inappropriately touched the victim on several occasions. Phelps also exchanged inappropriate text messages with the victim. Phelps's abuse of the minor was only uncovered after he mistakenly sent a text message exchange to an unintended recipient, and that recipient contacted police.

Sex Trafficking. In ***United States v. Summerlin and Gilliam***, Quiyemabi Summerlin was sentenced to 17.5 years for sex trafficking using force and coercion, maintaining a drug premises, and felon in possession of a firearm. Summerlin preyed on drug-addicted women and lured them into his and his fiancé's basement with false promises. Once there, he supplied them with heroin, fentanyl, and cocaine, and forced them to engage in endless commercial sex acts. At times, Summerlin used violence to ensure his victims' compliance. He also raped several of his victims. The FBI identified 25 women that stayed in Summerlin's home for some period of time, performing commercial sex acts at his direction. Summerlin's fiancé, Samantha Gilliam was sentenced to 8 years for conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking by force and coercion and maintaining a drug premises. Gilliam allowed Summerlin to use her home and many victims described how she assisted Summerlin in the exploitation of multiple women.



Victim Witness Specialist Alexandra Wyatt, AUSAs Ranya Elzein, Human Trafficking Survivor Leslie King, and Special Agents from Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) participate on a panel, which provided the public information about human trafficking—how to recognize it and report it.



USAO staff and HSI special agents and victim witness specialists, provided half-day human trafficking training to staff at the America's Community Council (ACC). L-R AUSAs Ronya Elzein, Sarah Cohen, and Victim Witness Specialist Alexandra Wyatt.

In **United States v. Sampson**, Lavonte Sampson was convicted of sex trafficking a minor and producing child pornography. Law enforcement received a tip regarding a missing 15-year-old girl. Agents promptly arranged an undercover commercial sex date, recovered the victim, and built a case against Sampson. Sampson had recruited the victim to engage in commercial sex, filmed the two of them having sex, and sent the video to the undercover agent when arranging the sex date for the victim. Sampson did this while under investigation by a local police department for his involvement in sex trafficking additional victims. Sampson was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Countering terrorism remained a top priority of the U.S. Department of Justice in 2024, 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**, Aws Mohammed Naser was charged in a superseding indictment 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 indictment alleges that between 2012 and October 2017, Aws Mohammed Naser attempted to provide material support to ISIS, in the form of personnel (including himself) and services, knowing that ISIS was a designated terrorist organization, and



U. S. Attorney Ison addresses attendees at the Great Lakes Homeland Security Training Conference in Grand Rapids.

that ISIS engages in terrorism. In addition, Naser is charged with being a felon in possession of a destructive device in October 2017. Naser faces up to 20 years in prison for attempting to support ISIS and up to 15 years in prison for possessing the destructive device.

False Statements. In *United States v. Xu*, Five Chinese nationals were charged in a criminal complaint with conspiracy, false statements, and destruction of records in a federal investigation. The five were students at the University of Michigan when they were caught photographing military equipment during a joint training exercise involving the Michigan National Guard and the Taiwanese military taking place at Camp Grayling, a U.S. military installation. When questioned by agents, the students provided false statements and misrepresentations as to why they were at Camp Grayling and deleted potentially incriminating photos from their phones and camera to preclude law enforcement from finding them.



AUSA Michael Martin receives commendation from FBI for his work in the U.S. v. Ibraheem Musaibli, a Dearborn resident who was convicted for providing and conspiring to provide material support to ISIS and received a 14-year sentence.

In *United States v. Pratt*, Jibreel Pratt was charged in an indictment with two counts of attempting to provide material support and resources to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), a foreign terrorist organization. Pratt is currently in custody awaiting trial.

Immigration. In 2024, we prosecuted approximately 70 individuals on various immigration related charges ranging from visa or passport fraud to individuals who were illegally in the United States, most of whom had previously been convicted of serious crimes. For example,

In *United States v. Diaz*, Edys Renan Membreno Diaz, a native and citizen of Honduras was charged in a federal complaint with unlawful re-entry following removal. Diaz is currently serving a 6–15-year sentence for Criminal Sexual Conduct-3rd Degree and a 1-2 year sentence for Criminal Sexual Conduct -4th Degree that occurred in 2022 in Oakland County. Diaz was initially removed from the United States in February 2019. He was removed 5 additional times before the sexual assault crime occurred on July 17, 2022. Diaz's federal case is still pending.



U.S. Attorney Ison and Criminal Chief Dan Hurley tour our border with our partners in green, Chief Border Patrol Agent John Morris and CBP staff.

In *United States v. Diaz-Lopez*, Angel Diaz-Lopez, a native and citizen of Mexico, was charged in an indictment with unlawful re-entry following removal. Diaz-Lopez, who had previously been removed from the United States in 2010 and again in 2019, was arrested and charged with criminal sexual conduct, first degree in July of 2019 in Wayne County. The sexual conduct

involved a 12-year-old victim. He was sentenced to 11-20 years in prison. Diaz-Lopez's federal case is still pending.

In ***United States v. Ramos-Marroquin***, Adelso Ramos-Marroquin, a native and citizen of Guatemala, pleaded guilty to being an alien in possession of a firearm and ammunition and was sentenced to 2 years in federal prison. Ramos-Marroquin had illegally entered the United States on at least four prior occasions. Ramos-Marroquin was arrested by Detroit Police after they responded to a call for a felonious assault and a report of a man with a gun. When the police responded, they identified Ramos-Marroquin and following a search they recovered a 9mm pistol with an extended magazine, loaded with seven live rounds. Ramos-Marroquin also had extra ammunition for the gun in his pocket.



U.S. Attorney Ison with Chief Morris and Customs and Border Patrol agents.

FRAUD

Another enforcement priority is fraud, encompassing corporate fraud, environmental violations, health care fraud, identity theft, and other offenses. In 2024, we used civil and criminal enforcement tools to combat fraud. Like too many other parts of the country, the District has had a substantial problem with individuals seeking to enrich themselves by defrauding pandemic relief programs. Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) was the principal pandemic relief program targeted by criminal actors; loan programs designed to help small businesses get through the pandemic, such as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program also proved vulnerable to fraud.

COVID Fraud. In ***United States v. Harrison et al.*** The last of fifteen defendants was sentenced for defrauding state unemployment insurance agencies during the Covid-19 pandemic. The defendants in this case devised schemes to defraud several states and the federal government by filing fraudulent unemployment insurance claims using other people's personal identifiable information without their knowledge or consent. The defendants used various means to further their schemes. The schemes resulted in the filing of nearly 600 fraudulent unemployment insurance claims in 19 states that resulted in a loss of \$2,020,851 to state unemployment insurance agencies. For the defendants sentenced to prison time, their sentences ranged between 2 and 5 years. As part of their sentences, the defendants were also ordered to pay a total of over \$2 million in restitution to the victims of their fraud.

In ***United States v. Fluker***, Antonio Lynn Fluker was sentenced to more than 11 years in prison following his conviction for wire fraud and money laundering in connection with a multi-million-dollar pandemic loan fraud scheme. Fluker defrauded the U.S. Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loan program. As part of his scheme,

Fluker prepared and submitted false applications in the names of multiple individuals and companies to obtain approximately 23 loans and loan advances, resulting in more than \$3.6 million in fraud. Fluker then used this money for his own personal expenses, including sending \$75,000 in loan proceeds to a luxury car dealer to obtain a Lamborghini. As part of his plea agreement, Fluker also admitted to obtaining more than half a million dollars through bank fraud and another approximately \$170,000 from credit cards obtained through identity theft. Fluker was also ordered to pay \$3.8 million in restitution.

Investment Fraud. In *United States v. Halbani*, Izhak Halbani, the leader of an extensive real estate fraud scheme was sentenced to 4 years in prison after having pleaded guilty to conspiring to commit mail and wire fraud. Halbani, led a telemarketing fraud scheme based in Florida that lured victims into purchasing residential real estate in Detroit and elsewhere by falsely telling victims they were buying bank-owned properties at a fraction of the remaining mortgage balance. These properties were then purportedly “flipped” to hedge funds and foreign investors—generating supposed returns for the victims and inducing them to invest more into the scheme. In reality, the properties the victims purchased were not bank-owned but instead were owned by other entities controlled by Halbani and his co-conspirators, who had routinely purchased the properties for a fraction of what the victims paid. The scheme victimized over 290 individuals, involved more than 2000 properties, and caused losses totaling at least \$19 million. Halbani was the 20th defendant to be convicted and sentenced in this case.



U.S. Attorney Ison addresses attendees at Federal Bar Association's Mid-West Securities Conference about corporate misconduct held at Wayne State University Law School.

Wire Fraud. In *United States v. Thomas*, Zina Thomas, Director of Homeownership Programs for the United Community Housing Coalition was charged in an indictment with conspiring with other individuals to steal over 30 properties across Wayne County, predominately located in the City of Detroit. Thomas and others perpetrated a scheme to defraud by filing multiple fraudulent quitclaim deeds, frequently transferring the target properties from the victim-owners to non-existent “interim owners” before ultimately selling the properties to unwitting third parties. The scheme targeted low-

income individuals who were facing potential tax foreclosure.

In *United States v. Beard*, Wendy Halstead Beard, an art dealer, was sentenced to 5 years and 3 months in prison for wire fraud. Beard’s sentence followed her guilty plea to one count of wire fraud arising from a multi-year scheme in which she received millions of dollars’ worth of fine art photography prints on consignment, sold the artwork without the knowledge of the owners, kept the profits for her own personal gain, and continually deceived the owners about the status of

their photographs. Beard was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of more than two million dollars.

In ***United States v. Royer***, Jeffrey A. Royer, a former FBI agent and convicted felon, was indicted for defrauding investors in a foreign currency (“forex”) trading scheme. The charges include commodities fraud and wire fraud. Royer executed an investment fraud scheme involving his personal forex trading account. As part of the scheme, Royer fraudulently solicited and accepted over \$1 million from various investors in the Eastern District of Michigan and elsewhere. He then misappropriated the money or lost it trading forex. Royer did not disclose the misappropriation or the extent of his trading losses. Instead, Royer concealed the truth from investors, including by providing investors with false monthly account statements that showed investment gains rather than the trading losses that Royer actually incurred.

Money Laundering. In ***United States v. Ogunghide***, Christian Ogunghide was sentenced 2 years in prison for his role in helping fraudsters steal money from both individual and business victims after having pleaded guilty to laundering money derived from wire fraud. Ogunghide engaged in numerous financial transactions involving over \$1 million in funds obtained by others through business email compromise fraud schemes and romance fraud schemes. He allowed fraudsters to use bank accounts he controlled to receive monies fraudulently taken from both individuals and businesses. He then disseminated the funds, effectively eliminating any chance the victims had to get their money back. Ogunghide was ordered to pay \$1,207,155.66 in restitution to the victims in this case.

Auto Theft. In ***United States v. Romane***, Romane Porter was sentenced to 8 years in prison for conspiring to steal recalled Volkswagen and Audi vehicles from a lot in Pontiac and sell them across state lines. After a 13-day trial, a jury convicted Romane Porter of conspiracy to transport stolen vehicles and transportation of stolen vehicles. The evidence presented during trial showed that for approximately 6 months in 2017, Porter and co-defendant Daniel Onorati conspired with each other and others to steal approximately 61 recalled Volkswagen and Audi cars that were parked at the site of the former Pontiac Silverdome. In addition to the 97-month sentence Porter was ordered to pay \$683,080 in restitution.

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.

False Claims Act/Anti-Kickback Statute. In *United States v. Ra Medical Systems, Inc.*, Ra Medical, a medical device company, agreed to a series of three civil settlements, totaling over \$8 million, related to its DABRA Laser. The settlement with Ra Medical resolves allegations that Ra Medical marketed the DABRA laser for use in atherectomies without having FDA approval, marketed the laser despite product performance issues and knowingly offered and paid illegal remuneration to certain physicians to induce them to use the DABRA Laser in violation of the Federal Anti-Kickback Statute. The Federal Anti-Kickback Statute prohibits offering or paying anything of value to induce referrals of items or services covered by Medicare and other federally funded programs. The statute is intended to ensure that a medical provider's judgment is not compromised by improper financial incentives.

In *United States v. NH Learning Solutions Corp, (NHLS)*, NHLS agreed to pay \$975,000 to resolve allegations in a lawsuit that it submitted false claims to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for inflated educational assistance benefits under the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (Post-9/11 GI Bill). The United States filed suit against NHLS under the False Claims Act (FCA). Detroit-based NHLS provided technology-focused, non-college degree programs at locations across the Midwest and Northeast. The government alleged that NHLS repeatedly reported tuition and fees to the VA on student invoices, where it failed to deduct the tuition scholarships, grants, or waivers it provided to certain veterans, thereby causing the VA to overpay NHLS for educational assistance benefits under the Post-9/11 GI-Bill for these veterans.

In *United States v. Avertest, LLC*, Avertest, a forensic drug testing company based in Richmond, Virginia, and which does business nationwide under the name Averhealth, agreed to pay \$1,344,621 to settle allegations that it knowingly violated the False Claims Act (FCA) by submitting to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) improper claims for payment for drug tests. The settlement resolved allegations that Averhealth violated the FCA when it knowingly submitted, or caused the submission of, claims for payment to MDHHS, and knowingly made statements material to those claims, which concerned positive drug test results for oral fluid samples that were not confirmed using a mass spectrometric method analytically different from the screening method, and did not conform to the terms of the contract between Averhealth and MDHHS.

In *United States v. Aronovitz*, James Aronovitz, D.O., and Michigan Ear Care PLLC agreed to pay over \$2 million to resolve allegations that they violated the False Claims Act by charging the Medicare and Medicaid programs for services purportedly provided by Aronovitz, but actually rendered by physician assistants who Aronovitz did not properly supervise.

In *United States v. Locke*, Holly Locke agreed to a court order preventing her from participating in behavior that facilitates a suspected international fraud ring. This civil action is the first of its kind in the Eastern District of Michigan and is part of a broader trend in recent years by the Department of Justice to disrupt international fraud rings that target United States citizens through fake social media profiles. Locke is alleged to have acted as a money transmitter after

meeting and developing a romantic relationship with a fraudster online. Once the relationship developed, Locke then began receiving numerous packages from strangers containing money, which she passed on to her purported fiancé/husband. The money was sent from victims who believed they were assisting their own online romantic partners and friends.

ONE DETROIT

We launched our first partnership in Detroit, our largest city in the District. Through this partnership, we have brought together leaders of the community and those with subject matter expertise in the areas of enforcement, prevention, and reentry—the three pillars that serve as the foundation for One Detroit—to develop and execute the best strategies to reduce violent crime. And although collaboration between local, state, and federal law enforcement working together and sharing information already existed in Detroit, our goal is not to reinvent the wheel, but rather to identify what works and build a framework to formalize our participation.

The One Detroit executive team is comprised of a broad array of community stakeholders, local, state, and federal law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and our research partner from Michigan State University. More specifically, the other One Detroit Executive Team members include, Mayor Mike Duggan, Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy, Detroit Police Chief James White, Detroit Police Department Citywide Community Relations Council President Alvin Stokes, Black Family Development CEO Kenyatta Stephens, Bishop Edgar Vann, Second Ebenezer Church, Michigan Department of Corrections Assistant Deputy Director Beverly Smith, Special Agent in Charge James M. Deir (ATF), Special Agent in Charge Cheyvorvea (FBI), Special Agent in Charge Orville O. Greene (DEA) and Research Analyst Christopher Melde (MSU).

The One Detroit partnership's enforcement efforts involve close coordination between federal and local law enforcement to identify emerging violent offenders or trends within particular neighborhoods. We draw on the expertise of local officers who have deep experience in the communities they serve. And we pair that personalized knowledge with technology like the National Integrated Ballistics Identification Network (NIBIN), ShotSpotter, and evidence-based tools that help us focus on the small number of people perpetrating violence. Federal prosecutors, along with representatives from ATF and FBI, attend weekly violent crime meetings in five Detroit Police precincts—2, 4, 8, 9, and 11—where they triage cases for potential federal prosecution.



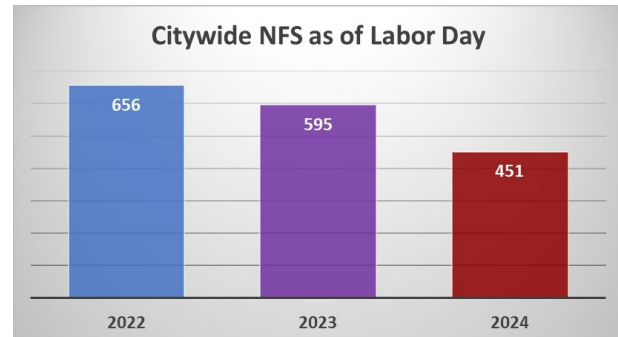
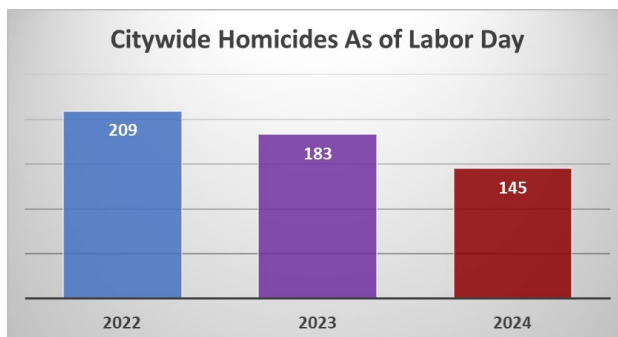
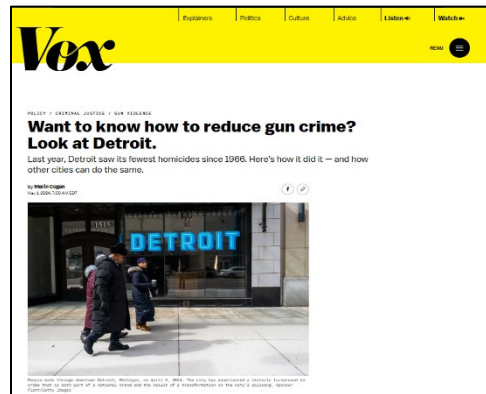
One Detroit Partnership announces a Unified Summer Strategy.

Since 2022, the USAO's violence reduction strategy has included enhanced enforcement during the summer months when violent crime spikes throughout the country. We focus on two Detroit neighborhoods with the highest incidence of violent crime – Detroit's 8th and 9th Precincts. The initiative, which was incorporated as part of the formal One Detroit

Partnership, begins on Memorial Day and ends on Labor Day and is designed to prosecute the most violent individuals and crimes in federal court when possible.

This effort resulted in 23 cases being accepted for prosecution in federal court. All of those cases involved the illegal possession of firearms. During the investigations of these offenses, 26 guns were seized. ATF has now analyzed those guns and determined that 14 of them were crime guns linked through ballistics to 42 other crimes including non-fatal shootings and a homicide.

You can read more about Detroit's reduction in violent crime by clicking [here](#).



U.S. Attorney Ison highlights the success of the USAO's One Detroit Violence Reduction Partnership in reducing crime in Detroit at DPD's End of the Year Stats press conference.

PEACENICS

2024 saw our third annual Peacenics, a collective gathering of the community and law enforcement where we shared in food, fellowship and fun in the name of peace.

The events featured vendors offering a variety of resources, including job training, literacy programs, mental health and medical screenings, utility assistance, educational and vocational opportunities, tutorial, career development expungement assistance and more.

The Peacenics allowed residents the opportunity to have fun, engage with law enforcement, and obtain resources to improve the quality of their lives. Thousands of Detroit residents attended the two Peacenics held on June 15 in Heilmann Park and June 29 in O'Hair Park.



United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison welcomes residents to the 3rd Annual Peacenics.



Children enjoyed petting the zoo animals at the One Detroit Peacenic at Heilmann Rec Center.



Over 70 vendors provided resources to the community during the Peacenics.



Gently- used clothing for all sizes in need were a big hit at the Peacenic Thrift Clothing Boutique.



USAO staff and community members challenged each with card games.



Attendees enjoy the entertainment at the 9th Precinct Peacenic.



AUSA Adriana Dydell reads to children at the 8th Precinct Peacenic.



One Detroit Executive Committee at the 8th Precinct Peacenic.



L-R Legal Administrative Specialist Cinque Harris and Executive Assistant to U.S. Attorney Ison Stacey Harris, volunteer at Peacenics.



AUSA John Neal reads to children in the 9th Precinct Peacenic library.



Jayla Colvin, winner of the inaugural One Detroit Define, Imagine, and Redefine Essay Contest expresses her gratitude.

Families dancing at 8th Precinct Peacenic. [Click here.](#)



Law enforcement and community enjoy hustling together at the Peacenics.

2024 also saw our first Peacenic in the city of Ypsilanti. Like the Peacenics in Detroit, law enforcement partners and community organizations joined together to provide support and resources to the residents of Ypsilanti and surrounding communities. U.S. Attorney Dawn Ison addressed the residents who came out to enjoy the day. You can watch her address [here](#).

U.S. Attorney Ison goes door-to-door with Ypsilanti Township Sergeant Eugene Rush and other Peacenic organizers to promote Ypsilanti inaugural Peacenic. [Click here.](#)



U.S. Attorney Dawn N. Ison and law enforcement partners at Ypsilanti Peacenic.



Ypsilanti Township Sgt. Eugene Rush, USA Dawn Ison, DJ Quan and Rev. Joseph Jackson at the Ypsilanti Peacenic.



Detroit Deputy Mayor Todd Bettison, Detroit Ms. Marjorie Mainer and USA Ison support Ypsilanti's inaugural Peacenic.



Attendees at Ypsilanti Peacenic take advantage of the resources provided.



Ypsilanti Peacenic organizers and volunteers prepare to walk door-to-door to promote Ypsilanti's first Peacenic.

At the conclusion of the One Detroit Summer Enforcement Strategy, United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison and One Detroit partners, local community organizations, and state and federal law enforcement gathered to share the results from the summer with community members in the 8th and 9th precincts.



US Attorney Ison, Deputy Police Chief Arnold Williams, FBI Special Agent in Charge Cheyvoryea Gibson, ATF Special Agent in Charge James Deir and Alvin Stokes, President, Citywide Citizens Police Community Relations

One Detroit hosted a Community Peace March in the 9th Precinct in September as well as one in the 8th Precinct in October. After the reporting out of the results, the One Detroit Partners joined community members to walk through these neighborhoods in the name of peace.



Bishop Daryl Harris of Detroit Ceasefire, DPD Chaplin Yolanda Coburn-Stinson, & 9th Precinct Community Relations Council President Ms. Turner-Handy joined our peace marches in the 8th & 9th precincts.



The One Detroit partnership also focused on reentry as a way of preventing recidivism by empowering returning citizens to become stable, contributing members of the Detroit community. More than 170 returning citizens participated in community roundtables intended to provide motivation and insight about taking advantage of second chances after a criminal conviction. At the events, family members of probationers were also invited to participate in breakout sessions to discuss barriers to stability. One Detroit partners also assisted with employment needs and helped connect attendees with resources.



U.S. Attorney Ison addresses returning citizens at One Detroit reentry community roundtables.



U.S. Attorney Ison and Darryl Woods, Founder and CEO of non-profit organization Fighting the Good Fight, address returning citizens at One Detroit reentry community roundtable.



Jamal Clemons, who participated in a September 2023 community roundtable and was matched with Goodwill Industry's Flip the Script Program, within one month completed the required testing, earned his GED, and was subsequently accepted into Wayne State University. Flip the Script honored Clemons as the 2024 Man of the Year for transforming his life.

U.S. Attorney Ison joined the Detroit Pistons, NBA Social Justice Coalition & others at the Second Chance Summit where citizens were provided expungement assistance in an effort to remove barriers to opportunities in employment, housing and more. The summit was part of Second Chance Month, which is a nationwide effort to raise awareness of the barriers faced by individuals with criminal records and unlock brighter futures for returning citizens.



James Cadogan, Executive Director, National Basketball Social Justice Coalition, Mark Barnhill, Platinum Equity, U.S. Attorney Dawn N. Ison, Detroit Pistons Vice Chairman Arn Tellem, and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan at Second Chance Summit.

DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL LISA MONACO IN DETROIT

In Detroit, the Deputy AG Monaco underscored the strong law enforcement and community partnerships that led the city to close out 2023 with the fewest homicides on record in over 50 years. She met with Detroit Police Chief James White and toured the Detroit Police Department's Real-Time Crime Center, which harnesses real-time data to help federal, state, and local law enforcement collaborate to tackle violent crime. Together with U.S. Attorney Dawn N. Ison and other city officials, the Deputy AG delivered remarks at a convening of One Detroit — the Eastern District of Michigan's violent crime reduction initiative that brings together law enforcement, nonprofits, faith leaders, and policymakers to address every element of violent crime.



One Detroit Violence Reduction Partnership Executive Committee discuss strategy with Deputy Attorney General Monaco.



Deputy Attorney General Monaco and Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General Miller hear from DPD precinct AUSAs about One Detroit enforcement efforts and strategies.



United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison, Deputy Attorney General Lisa O. Monaco, Detroit Police Chief James White, and Detroit Deputy Mayor Todd Bettison at One Detroit meeting at DPD headquarters.

A video capturing Deputy Attorney General Monaco's is located [here](#).



2024 OFFICE HIGHLIGHTS

SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM

In 2024, we welcomed a number of guests to the Eastern District of Michigan's USAO as part of our Special Emphasis Programs. These programs—which help to develop a diverse and talented workforce—provide awareness, sensitivity and understanding of the special issues affecting employment of diverse groups.

In recognition of Women's History Month, U.S. District Judge Brandy R. McMillion and Michigan State Police Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Sarah Krebs spoke to the staff about the importance of commitment and allyship.



USAO Staff listening to presentation from U.S. District Judge McMillion and Officer Krebs



Paralegal Specialist Christine Ouellette, US District Judge Brandy McMillion, MSP Officer Krebs, AUSA Venisha Cezil



AUSA Diane Princ, survivor of domestic violence and Victim Witness Specialist Alexandra Wyatt. The survivor shared her story with USAO staff in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.



Jayne Rowse, a plaintiff in the landmark 2015 same-sex marriage case in Michigan that changed the landscape of the right to marry across the US, shared with us what led her to file suit, how her family was affected by it & what it means to her family 9 years after the historic decision.

In recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, our office hosted an interactive demonstration from three Orientation and Mobility Specialists Kirsten Davie, Patrick Draheim, and Clare Campagna, who work daily with individuals who are blind or have low vision. These experts highlighted the many adaptive tools that the visually impaired use to navigate the world and provided us an opportunity to experience them for ourselves. Understanding these tools and how to appropriately approach those who use them can mean all the difference in making a positive first impression and establishing a good rapport with a co-worker, cooperator, or victim.



In recognition of Human Trafficking Awareness Month, staff in the Detroit, Flint and Bay City offices wore blue. The Blue Campaign is a national public awareness campaign designed to educate the public, law enforcement, and other industry partners to recognize the indicators of human trafficking, and how to appropriately respond to possible cases.



Bay City Staff



Flint Office Staff



Detroit Staff

The office welcomed Lauren Sowell, a sex trafficking survivor who shared her powerful story & how she is using her voice to help others. FBI Victim Specialist Special Agent Jessica Sumyk discussed the victim-centered approach to prosecuting sex trafficking cases.



L-R, AUSA Ranya El Zein (Moderator), FBI Special Agent Jessica Sumyk, Survivor Lauren Sowell, FBI Victim Witness Specialist Melissa Novocain and USA Ison.

NEW TO THE USAO

In 2024, we officially welcomed our newest team members to the United States Attorney's Office.



The Detroit office welcomed new Assistant United States Attorneys Sarah Alsaden, Kelly Fasbinder, Stephen Carr, Venisha Cezil, Philip Jacques, Aleks Bomis, Sean King and Micah Wallace, pictured with United States Attorney Ison .

AWARDS

In 2024, we celebrated the amazing accomplishments of our staff.

Each year we highlight a select number of staff with special awards. We congratulate this year's winners of U.S. Attorney's Awards, the Michele Tomsho Award, the Donna Fobbs Award & the Gershel/Wicks Award. We salute you.

United States Attorney Awards



Executive Assistant to the United States Attorney Stacey, Public Affairs Officer Gina Balaya, Paralegal Specialist Jacquelyn Sommers and Executive Assistant Lauren Mercer (not pictured) were awarded the U.S. Attorney's Award for superior performance by an Executive Support Team.

Michele Tomsho Award

Legal Assistant Lisa Mundy was awarded the Michele Tomsho Award for her integrity, professionalism and dedication to the office and community, all of which defined Michele Tomsho's character and personality.



Donna Fobbs Award



Paralegal Tracey Pyle was awarded the Donna Fobbs Memorial Award for her professionalism, steadiness, reliability, positive attitude, strong commitment to USAO, and a high degree of competence in carrying out assignments.

Gershel/Wicks Award



Each year, we honor two former Division Chiefs – Alan Gershel (Criminal) and Mike Wicks (Civil) and present the Gershel-Wicks Teamwork Award to a group of employees to recognize outstanding teamwork. This year we honor our Records Information Management Team, Theresa Boyer (not pictured) Elizabeth Doran and Cindy Cole. The three are being honored for their exceptional work in the physical file closing project. They organized case management meetings twice a week to guide and support the unit POCs. They closed files themselves. They worked with others to organize file rooms. They enforced the rules to comply with federal rules and regulations. They were cheerleaders, workers, and they pushed through for years to get this work done.

Superior Performance in Community Outreach and Engagement



Jessica Stanton is the recipient of this award due to her extraordinary commitment to community outreach and engagement. She serves as an alternate representative for the USAO on Flint and Saginaw's ALPACT. Jessica has been an active member of the Flint Youth Initiative since its founding, mentoring kids each year and has maintained a long-term relationship through Big Brothers/Big Sisters with her first-generation FYI mentee, who is now in high school.

Superior Performance for Mindful Inclusion Training



Frances Carlson and Michael El-Zein (not pictured) showed such commitment and professionalism in leading our office through Mindful Inclusion training. They presented material to all of us with sensitivity and good humor so we could all learn about our own implicit biases – so we can all be better at our jobs, be better colleagues, and be better representatives in the community for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Superior Performance as the Project Safe Childhood Coordinator



In 2023, Chris Rawsthorne was the office's Project Safe Childhood Coordinator. He was as passionate, committed, and driven as any coordinator the office has ever had. He missed some vacations, gave up some weekends, without complaint because of his commitment to the work. Chris worked tirelessly to protect children, to prosecute their perpetrators, and to work for justice.

Superior Performance by a Criminal Case Team



Mark Bilkovic, Tare Wigod (not pictured), and Raj Prasad, persuaded a jury to convict Billy Arnold of RICO conspiracy after a lengthy trial. Arnold was the leader, or as he described himself in a jail call, the “CEO,” of the Seven Mile Bloods, a violent street gang that operated on the east side of Detroit in an area dubbed “the Red Zone.” The six-week trial was the team's second against Arnold—one holdout caused a hung jury in the first trial last summer—and the office's fourth against the Bloods. Arnold is the 20th member of the Seven Mile Bloods convicted as a result of this investigation. The conviction could not have happened without the extraordinary support provided by paralegals Maria Decarlo, Erika Sims (not pictured) and Deborah Burson.

Superior Performance by a Criminal Case Team



pursuing financial investigation and asset recovery.

What began as a delivery of drugs in a Sony PlayStation box led agents to a stash location in Novi where a drug organization stored more than 30 kilograms of fentanyl and over half a million dollars. At the time, in July 2017, it was the largest fentanyl seizure in Michigan and remains one of the largest in DEA's history. The case ended with the conviction of eighteen defendants (two after trial in 2023), with significant sentences and forfeitures. This outstanding collaboration between multiple units (along with Main Justice), with agents from DEA and IRS-CI, truly represents the values of our office in action: their teamwork and tenacity dismantled a major multistate conspiracy through sophisticated deployment of criminal prosecution skills and denied the bad actors involved the enjoyment of the fruits of their criminal conduct by

Superior Performance by a Civil AUSA



the United States! This was a herculean effort and a masterful example of excellent lawyering. Zak deserves a special recognition for a great job defending the United States and for his hard work protecting the broad contours of the always important sovereign immunity doctrine.

In May 2020, the Edenville Dam in mid-Michigan partially collapsed, flooding many downstream residents, damaging nearly 2,500 homes and buildings, and caused damages in excess of \$200 million. After the dam's operator went bankrupt in the wake of the flooding, several affected residents sued the little-known federal agency called FERC: the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission under the Federal Tort Claims Act arguing that FERC, which licenses hydroelectric facility owners, negligently entrusted the dam to its now-bankrupt owner. D-Team Unit Chief Zak Toomey was the one that received the complaint. The case ended up on appeal. Zak then carefully crafted the appellate argument and prepared for the numerous questions he expected to face about the century old statute. The Sixth Circuit agreed with

Superior Performance by a Civil Team



This team is receiving an award for their work in *Bryant v. Mayorkas*, a case in which the team presented a compelling defense of Customs and Border Patrol after an employee was demoted from his probationary supervisory position.

As our team, consisting of AUSA Jennifer Newby, AUSA Brittany Parling and Paralegal Specialist Tracey Pyle artfully demonstrated to the jury, the agency was well within its rights to demote the probationary supervisor after several colleagues alleged he was sleeping on the job. The sleeping incident, one among several different events, happened in an area where those crossing the border could have seen him- a look that doesn't inspire confidence in the agency we trust to ensure our border's safety and security. Throughout it all, our team displayed

the utmost professionalism and successfully supported the agency's ability to effectively manage its employees based solely on whether or not they are suitable for the position.

Superior Performance by a Civil Team



In this case, which resulted in the United States recovering more than \$69 million through three related settlements with the Covenant Healthcare System and two physicians, the government resolved allegations that Covenant violated the False Claims Act by devising and participating in a scheme in which it provided unlawful remuneration to certain physicians, in exchange for their referral of patients to defendant Covenant Medical Center.

These settlements represent the fruits borne of unwavering perseverance, discipline, compelling oral and written advocacy, superb investigative work, and an exemplary commitment to the pursuit of justice, all of which were rendered through the incredible teamwork of AUSA Jonny

Zajac, ACE Investigator Jon Sonbay, ACE Paralegal Kat Washington and Legal Administrative Specialists Michelle Land and Aida Garmo. While many would have rested the government's case

following a terrific multi-million-dollar recovery against the defendant healthcare system, Jonny, Jon, and Kat, ever committed to the mission, steadfastly focused their efforts to eventually hold accountable the two most culpable physicians, as well.

Superior Performance by a Support Staff



Erika Sims co-created a training program for new legal administrative specialists. She then was a trainer for a 12-week session of intense and detailed training sessions. Erika did this in addition to her regular duties which she completes with the highest degree of competence. Erika also is a mentor for new legal administrative specialists. She has never said “no” to an assignment from the STAR Committee to be a mentor, sometimes being a mentor for multiple individuals.



Branch Chief Tony Vance presents Flint Office LAS Jessica Szukhent with an Outstanding Employee award from the Flint Area Chapter of the Federal Executive Association.

The Federal Executive Boards (FEBs) are the cornerstone of federal presence across the United States. Currently organized into 26 boards, across four regions, with plans for expansion, they form a bridge between Washington D.C. and local communities. Focused on streamlining government functions, the FEBs support the majority of federal employees—over 85%—who live and work beyond the nation's capital.



AUSAs and Support staff in General Crimes Unit, Drug Task Force, and Violent and Organized Crime Unit engage in a friendly competition by entering the Growler's Gallop 5k Race.



A day at the ATF range with U.S. Attorney Ison, the USAO interns and AUSAs.

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.

The longest serving AUSA retires in 2024 after 41 years of public service with the Department of Justice.



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



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

U.S. Attorney Ison was honored to have been selected to introduce Attorney Merrick Garland before his address to the Department of Justice Workforce in the Great Hall in October 2024.



U.S. Attorney Ison in the Great Hall introducing Attorney General Merrick Garland.



U.S. Attorney Ison with Attorney General Merrick Garland.

U.S. Attorney Ison was equally honored to be awarded America's Community Council's Leadership in Inclusion award.



Thanks to the entire staff of the United States Attorney's Office for your dedicated service!

