

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1304

May 22, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

I write to urge you to increase the Department of Justice's support for gun violence prevention efforts in Chicago. Specifically, I request that the Justice Department expand the ability for Chicago-area law enforcement to make use of four resources that can significantly reduce gun violence: Strategic Decision Support Centers (SDSCs), the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), federal gun trafficking investigations and prosecutions, and the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP). Prompt support from the Justice Department for these initiatives can save lives in Chicago as we approach the summer months when shootings typically increase.

Please provide answers to the following questions about the Department's efforts in each of these areas. I request that you provide these answers no later than June 2, 2017.

Strategic Decision Support Centers: Two of the Chicago police districts with the highest number of shooting incidents in 2016, Englewood and Harrison, saw dramatic decreases in shootings in early 2017 after the districts set up SDSCs where University of Chicago Crime Lab analysts assisted officers in analyzing surveillance and gunshot detection information to better target policing resources. I am confident that as SDSCs are established with full-time analysts in more police districts, shootings will be reduced and lives can be saved.

- 1. Is the Department of Justice coordinating with the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and the University of Chicago Crime Lab to help enhance the operation of SDSCs?**
- 2. What federal resources can you immediately provide to the CPD and the Crime Lab to help support SDSCs as we head into the summer months?**

National Integrated Ballistic Information Network: When the only evidence left at the scene of a shooting is ammunition casings, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' NIBIN system can help law enforcement match casings to particular crime guns and develop investigative leads to catch shooters. It is critical that the Justice Department improve the utilization of NIBIN to help identify suspects in unsolved Chicago shootings.

- 3. Will ATF add CPD to the list of 24 agencies that are currently allowed to utilize the NIBIN National Correlation and Training Center in Huntsville, Alabama, which provides correlation review services to help quickly process and match casing evidence?**

4. How will the Department utilize the new NIBIN mobile laboratory van to assist efforts in the Chicagoland area?

5. What other ways can the Department help increase the use of NIBIN in Chicago?

Investigating and prosecuting gun trafficking networks: It is well known that a significant percentage of crime guns recovered in Chicago were trafficked into the city from other states. I am concerned about the absence of federal laws specifically prohibiting gun trafficking and straw purchasing, and I am a cosponsor of bipartisan legislation, the Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act, that would close these gaps in our federal laws and encourage increased federal investigation and prosecution of gun trafficking networks.

6. Will the Justice Department commit to support this legislation in order to help reduce the pipeline of illicit guns into Chicago?

7. Is the Justice Department working to federally prosecute those who sell or supply guns to others knowing or having reasonable cause to believe that the guns will be used to commit a crime of violence? Please explain your answer.

Bulletproof Vest Partnership: I intend to introduce legislation to expand the Justice Department's Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) to help defray the costs of vests that protect police officers in Chicago and elsewhere against shootings. At current funding levels the BVP is not able to provide significant assistance to larger police departments like Chicago's. I intend to push for increased appropriations for the BVP and to prioritize those additional BVP resources for law enforcement agencies that have had officers shot in the line of duty in the current or previous year.

8. Will the Department commit to work with me in this effort?

Thank you for your prompt attention to these requests. I sincerely hope we can work together constructively in these areas to reduce the scourge of gun violence in Chicago and across our nation.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator