



TISHAURA O. JONES
MAYOR

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF ST. LOUIS
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Attorney General Andrew Bailey
Supreme Court Building
207 W. High Street
P.O. Box 899
Jefferson City, MO 65102
Sent by email: Diana.Haines@ago.mo.gov

August 31, 2023

Dear Attorney General Bailey,

Thank you for your letter issued in response to reports about forthcoming legislation in the City of St. Louis. I was surprised that you chose to send it prior to seeing any legislation.

State law explicitly empowers municipalities to enact certain state weapons offenses as our own ordinances, and to further provide for penalties as they deem appropriate. That is precisely what the City intends to do. As part of this, the City also intends to implement different sentencing approaches for juveniles and adults, and direct any fine revenue received under these new offenses to violence prevention efforts. These are common-sense, smart approaches that provide additional tools to fight and prosecute violent crime, and I am well within my rights as Mayor to work in partnership with our Board of Aldermen to enact them.

Your quips that the City needs to “use existing law to combat the crime plaguing your city” and to “go after criminals” denigrate and undercut the results obtained through hard work, grit, and selfless service of numerous City employees and City partners. It was disappointing to see you dismiss this extraordinary work, which is done every day by our St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (SLMPD), Office of Violence Prevention, and numerous community organizations.

Starting this past January, SLMPD in particular began implementing new evidence-based, proven crime reduction strategies. We all know crime rates fluctuate for many reasons. Having said that, today the City’s homicide rate is down more than 20 percent from 2022, and our homicide clearance rate stands at 77 percent – 20 percent above the national average. Our

property crime rates are also down by nearly 16 percent. Additionally in 2023, SLMPD seized at least 1,660 guns associated with criminal activity off our streets, and made over 800 gun arrests. While we collectively have more work to do, we are encouraged by these trends and dispute your unfounded allegations.

Contrary to popular belief, the City and its partners are indeed “using existing law to combat crime” and “going after criminals.” We will continue to use all the tools at our disposal to fight violent crime, including passing ordinances at the local level. Every step we take is a life preserved. Instead of acting to obstruct or misconstrue these efforts, I urge you to instead rise to the moment as a supportive partner, not just to my City but to all local governments, who—unlike you—are on the frontlines against gun violence in Missouri.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tishaura O. Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Tishaura O. Jones
Mayor, City of St. Louis

Cc: Governor Michael L. Parson
Lieutenant Governor Mike Kehoe