

LETTER TO MAYOR FISCHER FROM PRESIDENT DAVID JAMES AND THE MAJORITY
AND MINORITY CAUCUS CHAIRS re: PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGY

Dear Mayor Fischer,

We want to summarize what we have heard from Councilmembers in a bipartisan way to get through this current period of violence in the city. None of us disagree that there is a 'whole of city approach' that is needed but as the Mayor, the city looks to you to lead this initiative. These ideas were indicated in a series of recent emails including myself, CM Winkler and President James and we thought that bringing this together in one communication might help focus the administration on our ideas. We hope we can get a response on these ideas and, as one of the ideas indicates, some type of ongoing communication moving forward on progress.

Partnership with JCPS: What many of us saw happen late last week was another divide in this city only this time it was between the city and JCPS. We saw city officials focusing on JCPS reforms while JCPS officials were deflecting back at the city. We can't keep doing that. What we need is an immediate and ongoing partnership with JCPS focused on saving our children. Please call Dr. Pollio and setup a regular meeting to work through these topics and any others that can affect change through leveraging our combined resources. The city must stop acting like our responsibility ends when the child is on the bus and JCPS must stop acting like their responsibility ends when the child goes home at the end of the day. CM Coan talked about a 'One Louisville' strategy that could mirror what was done with the 'One Water' program years ago. At the time he was focusing on leveraging resources and infrastructure (great idea as a second wave of this initial partnership) but now we must prioritize the lives and well-being of children. What happens in both areas affects the other and we must start acting like it. Specifically, we offer the following ideas:

Partnering with JCPS on their SRO deployment – Honestly, we don't care what they ultimately call these personnel and how they use them (we defer to their expertise on that) but the focus here is High Schools. We need to work with them particularly on communication channels for those personnel that work in the High Schools. The Chief mentioned this and she is right that we have lost a level of coordination with these High Schools that, in the past, resulted in preventative measures before violence got out of hand.

Partnering with JCPS on OSHN deployment – We have fully funded all of your anti-violence initiatives but they would be inherently inefficient if they weren't coordinated with JCPS. They know which kids grades randomly fall or who is having trouble at home or who just had a traumatic event happen. They have some resources to help but they end at the bus stop. We must either co-locate OSHN resources or find another creative way to make those initiatives available to kids on a proactive basis based on the experience of JCPS. We know there are some legal and privacy issues to contend with but there are already health clinics that are co-located at schools so we are sure there is a way to do this.

Strategy to Fill Public Safety Staffing Gaps: There is no question that LMPD are understaffed and that is impacting their ability to fulfill their mission. What we are lacking is a coordinated strategy to get back to full strength. That strategy may include:

Utilizing retirees or other law enforcement agencies to fill immediate gaps. This could include some combination of hiring back retired officers or using other retired officers or those who have worked for us and now work for other agencies to fulfill some of the shifts that our officers are doing via forced overtime, etc.

Delegating additional functions to civilians to ease the burden on sworn officers. This could include additional civilians to help with traffic accident assessments, or simply doing the paperwork that officers need to complete that takes them away from being on the street.

Enhanced incentives to increase immediate LMPD class recruitment. This could take the shape of relocation money, sign on bonuses, or other incentives that would help boost our class sizes in the immediate term.

Immediately resume negotiations with the FOP and finalize the contract with urgency. We read in a recent report that you were not in a rush to restart negotiations with the FOP. We can't take that stance. We need you to immediately restart negotiations and get to a solution as soon as possible.

Tactical Plans to Solve Immediate Public Safety Problems: There are several tactical things that are currently happening which need to be addressed immediately. Those include:

Juvenile Photo Arrays – We understand that the state department of Juvenile Justice is not allowing LMPD to use photo arrays for juveniles when questioning witnesses. This is standard law enforcement practice and a critical tool to identify criminals. This needs to be resolved immediately and if this is a legislative problem, we would be happy to get the state legislature to fix it ASAP. We have been in touch with members of the Beshear Administration on this but to no avail. Please use your relationship to solve this as soon as possible.

Federal Law Enforcement Partnership Specifics – We were grateful to have ATF and FBI at the press conference but we didn't hear any specifics regarding what those relationships are yielding tactically or strategically. We need to know precisely what is coming of those relationships and what the outcomes of those relationships are. We also need to include the US Attorney's office which was conspicuously missing from the press conference.

GVI Implementation Plan Update – CM Piagentini has asked for a specific update on where we are in implementing GVI as compared to the detailed implementation plan which is on the public website. He has not heard back about that since September 2nd. Further, that needs to be a regular update including specific measurable activities and outcomes. As far as we are aware, this is the only program that we are working on currently which has an over 20-year track record of reducing group violence by, on average, 50% when it is properly implemented.

Reopen the Conversation on Juvenile Justice: There is no question that what we are doing is broken. We do not assume that the answer is simple but there should be something better we can do in the short term to hold some of these more violent juvenile offenders accountable while working toward a better long-term solution. My understanding is that the system created to move juveniles is so broken that officers and the judiciary is releasing them almost immediately. For example, we have heard from officers that in order to transfer a juvenile they have to wait for hours which makes them choose between that and supporting their partner on the street. After the assassination of Brandon Shirley, no law enforcement official should have to make that decision.

Immediate improvement in the transfer process – We are sure there is an immediate win that could be realized through improving the current transfer process. There is no reason an officer should wait for more than a few minutes to transfer a juvenile so they can get back on the street. There should be some quick wins realized through improving the current process.

Meeting with the Beshear Administration on reopening a juvenile detention facility in Jefferson County – When we shut down the juvenile detention facility, many Councilmembers were surprised that the state didn't have one anywhere near the population center that houses 25% of the population of the state. If we are to run this again, we would want to see commitments by the state that they will do a better job funding this program as unfunded ongoing expenses of that program were part of the issue particularly since it is a state government function. If we can come to some agreement with the state for better support, we need to open a juvenile detention facility in the city. Again, this must be done along with commitments from the state but we have to imagine that we can come to an agreement with them and get this opened sooner rather than later.

Regular Updates in a Public Forum: This is a crisis. During the COVID-19 crisis, Governor Beshear held daily press conferences for over an hour a day which included 30-40 minutes of taking questions from the press. We are not asking for daily press conferences but we need at least weekly public

addresses with full updates on some or all of the above topics along with priorities you have. These updates must be done publicly with media scrutiny that is not artificially cut short. There must also be some type of written update to council so we can engage with the public and update them on what the city is doing through our channels. Those written updates should summarize specifics, with data, on the tactics and strategies being implemented to combat this wave of violence.

The Council has an active roll to play in this as well. CM Winkler indicated a resolution for the judiciary pushing them to prioritize the highest penalties for gun violence. CM Piagentini will ask the state legislature to exercise their oversight authority of the judiciary and look into their role or complicity in this problem. We will also be working with the state legislature to give LMPD greater wiretap authority to combat criminal syndication, homicide, human trafficking, narcotics trafficking, and gun violence. We also need to engage with our citizenry as CM Arthur discussed at the initial press conference. We can and must be facilitators so we are helping share information with you that we are hearing and sharing information to the public that we learn from you.

Finally, if there are other opportunities for Council to help, let us know. As you indicated, you have been fully funded on every anti-violence program that was asked for in the budget. Councilmembers are open to additional ideas related to law enforcement tactics and built environment improvements. If there is something we missed that we can help with, let us know. To date we are unaware of any such request.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to hearing your thoughts about the above and continuing to consolidate ideas around an overall strategy to stop this wave of violence in our city.

Council President, David James
Council Majority Leader, Markus Winkler
Council Minority Leader, Anthony Piagentini