



LOUISVILLE METRO POLICE DEPARTMENT

JACQUELYN GWINN-VILLAROEEL
CHIEF OF POLICE



City, State and Federal Officials Form Prohibited Firearms Possessors Initiative to Curb Louisville Gun Violence

Multi-agency approach to identify and prosecute repeat firearm offenders to make Louisville safer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (January 23, 2024) – Today, Mayor Craig Greenberg joined city, state, and federal officials to announce the new Prohibited Firearms Possessors Initiative, or PFP; a new multi-agency effort to combat gun violence in Louisville. LMPD Police Chief Jacquelyn Gwinn-Villaroel, Jefferson County Commonwealth’s Attorney Gerina D. Whethers, Jefferson County Attorney Mike O’Connell and ATF Special Agent in Charge A.J. Gibes shared how the group formed, the goals of the initiative and the progress being made.

“To make Louisville a safer place for our people, we must take a more urgent and strategic approach to combating gun violence in our city – and to do that, we must work together,” said Mayor Greenberg. “This new initiative brings together law enforcement, prosecutors, and federal partners to identify and work together to address repeat gun offenders. Our goal is to be proactive and get more of these offenders off the street to make our community safer.”

“LMPD uses a number of strategies to reduce gun violence, and while we saw a decrease in homicides last year, we want to do more to continue that progress and make our city safer,” said LMPD Chief Gwinn-Villaroel. “By forming this multi-agency approach, we are seeing through a unified effort to remove these repeat gun offenders from Louisville’s neighborhoods and ultimately reduce gun violence.”

In October 2023, leaders from LMPD, the Jefferson County Commonwealth’s Attorney, the County Attorney, ATF, and the mayor’s office came together to strategize a new approach. From that initial discussion, PFP was formed. Since then, LMPD officially formed a unit and the Commonwealth’s Attorney identified prosecutors to lead the investigations identified. The first meeting between partners took place on January 8, and four cases have been identified and reviewed to test and examine the process. The agencies will meet monthly.

“This is a pivotal moment for us to move forward with integrity and transparency through a unified effort to make Louisville safer for every single person,” said Gerina D. Whethers, the Jefferson County Commonwealth’s Attorney. “This is an approach we’ve never seen before, with the right people working together at the right time for the right reasons. We are being intentional so that we can stop this hemorrhaging in our city and protect more lives.”

“People should feel safe while going about their daily lives in their cars, homes, and neighborhoods. One trigger pulled or a single bullet has the power to destroy that feeling of security in an instant,” O’Connell said. “That’s why all of us here have a bright, red circle drawn around repeat gun offenders.”



LOUISVILLE METRO POLICE DEPARTMENT

JACQUELYN GWINN-VILLAROEEL
CHIEF OF POLICE



“Despite some progress and reduction in the number of shootings over the last few years, gun crime continues to threaten our city,” said A.J. Gibes, ATF Assistant Special Agent in Charge for the Louisville Division. “We know that many violent crimes in our city are committed by a relatively small group of individuals. The Prohibited Firearms Possessor Initiative is aimed towards repeat offenders, those with violent histories and recent felony convictions. ATF is proud to join LMPD, the U.S. Attorney’s Office and our local prosecution partners in this new initiative as we work to protect our communities and keep Louisville safe.”

Since taking office in January 2023, Mayor Greenberg has made public safety a priority for his administration. One of his first actions as Mayor was naming Jacquelyn Gwinn-Villaroel as LMPD Police Chief. Chief Gwinn-Villaroel established the Non-Fatal Shooting Squad, a team focused on investigating these crimes to curb gun violence and prevent future tragedies. Homicides were down by 16% in 2023, compared to 2021. During that same two-year period, there was a 38% decrease in nonfatal shootings.

Mayor Greenberg and his administration also expanded the successful Deflection Program, a partnership with Seven Counties that sends social workers to respond to certain 911 calls that require a non-police response. In 2023, the team responded to over 1,000 calls.

The Mayor and LMPD also opened a new, state-of-the-art health and wellness facility for Louisville’s first responders in October 2023. The Summit Wellness Center was a joint effort between LMPD, Louisville Metro Police Foundation and other partners to offer physical and mental health support, as well as financial counseling and family support services. The center is now serving as a national model of how to support first responders and ultimately boost public safety.

###

