

House Appropriations Commerce Justice and Science Subcommittee Member Day Hearing
Testimony on Community Based Gun Violence Prevention Funding Request
Wednesday May, 18 2:00PM EST
Congresswoman Robin Kelly (IL-2)

Thank you for holding this member day hearing today.

I would like to take this time to discuss my appropriations funding request of \$750 million for Community Based Gun Violence Prevention.

The communities I represent on the south-side of Chicago and the south suburbs know gun violence all too well. Every Monday morning the Chicago Sun-Time wire reports the number of gunshot victims from the weekend. This past weekend 33 people were shot in Chicago, and 5 died, including a 16-year-old boy. These killings don't usually make national news, but weekends like this are far too common in the Chicago area.

Communities across the U.S. share this reality, especially black and brown communities, which are disproportionately affected by gun violence. The residents of these communities, the victims, and their loved ones, are forced to deal with the traumatic aftermath of violence. And in many communities, the violence doesn't stop.

Community-based gun violence prevention programs, also known as community violence intervention, or CVI, can be implemented to effectively reduce violence through community-based strategies. CVI programs focus on preventing crime and shootings before they happen through establishing relationships with those at highest risk of being victims and/or perpetrators of violence while connecting them to crucial social and economic services to reduce the likelihood of gun violence as an answer to conflict.

My funding request, supported by 119 Members in the House, requests \$375 million for the Office of Justice Program's Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative. This funding will directly support community organizations that lead collaborations between community leaders, social service providers, law enforcement, and high-risk individuals to interrupt violence and bring change to their communities.

The letter also requests \$375 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Youth Violence Prevention program to create a new Community Violence Intervention Initiative. This will allow the CDC to establish a grant program to support public health-focused community interventions such as hospital-based violence interruption programs which connect with survivors of violence in the hospital.

The request also directs funding from other violence prevention programs such as the Office for Victims of Crime or the Community Health Service Block Grant to go toward reducing gun violence and helping gun violence victims. The elevated and sustained rates of gun violence incidents in this country, such as the ones we saw this past weekend, will have long-lasting effects on communities' mental, physical, and social health.

This funding is imperative and would go to programs that have been shown to be effective. A study from the Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery showed that CVI programs can reduce homicide by 60 percent in communities where they are implemented. One program operated by Cure Violence showed more than a 63 percent reduction in shootings in the South Bronx communities that Cure Violence operated in, and a 100 percent reduction in 5 of the 8 Chicago communities they worked in.

This \$750 million in funding is an essential step in ending gun violence in the United States and in my district. I respectfully ask that the committee appropriate this funding for Community Based Gun Violence Prevention programs in FY23.