

SPOKEN 9.18 TESTIMONY

Thank you Chairman Williams, Ranking Member Velasquez and the committee for having me. I am Greg Jackson, a DC resident, survivor of gun violence here in the District, and former Deputy Director of the first-ever White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention. The office that coordinated federal resources, implemented life saving policies and coordinated with local leaders to reach a nationwide reduction in violent crime by 13.2% and homicides by 31% in just two years.

I've spent the last decade of my life working to address gun violence after being shot in 2013. I was shot while walking home and the bullet that struck me hit two arteries leaving me with only a 50% chance of survival. Since that fateful night when a bullet nearly cost me my life, over a million Americans have been shot or killed by gun violence. From Buffalo to Baltimore, Stockton to Washington, we have seen how gun violence is driving violent crime and destroying families across our country. Gun violence remains the leading cause of death for youth, the leading cause of death for pregnant women, and now even the leading cause of newly disabled Americans.

With 1 in 5 Americans being impacted by gun violence, this has become personal for too many. But we also know there is a clear financial cost to this crisis. According to Brady United and the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform, we have seen this crisis cost our economy upwards of \$557 billion a year, equivalent to 2.6% of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product. Its also important to note that southern states bear the majority of this economic toll, experiencing 41.4% of firearm related hospital costs and having firearm death rates 2.3 times higher than Northeastern states. Additionally, gun violence has a direct cost for employers. Between 2007 and 2020, the number of health insured employees or dependents of companies that were shot increased by 400%, with estimates that suffering a firearm injury is associated with a \$30,000 increase in direct medical spending for the employer in the first year alone. Lastly, employers must give employees who are shot a leave of absence and the estimated cost of this leave is over \$535 million a year according to Harvard Medical School research.

Despite this crisis we face, the last few years have shown us that we have solutions that work.

In the last two years before the Trump administration, DC and cities across the country saw HISTORIC reductions in gun violence WITHOUT the deployment of the masked agents or military. We did this by investing in prevention and intervention efforts in communities most at risk and strategically investing in law enforcement to close homicides and keep illegal guns from pouring into our streets.

Recently, even the current FBI Director Kash Patel celebrated historic low levels of violent crime, but these reductions are not the result of a few months of troops or FBI actions, they are the result of billions in prevention resources, **law enforcement and community leaders risking their lives everyday to prevent tragedy**, as well as transformative bipartisan policies implemented years before he was appointed.

Without masked federal agents or troop deployments, we saw homicides drop

- 54% in Baltimore
- 38% in Chicago
- 20% in Atlanta
- 41% in Phoenix
- 27% in Los Angeles

As shared by District leadership, even violent crime in DC is down by 53%, reaching its lowest level in decades.

We got here, in major part, because Republicans and Democrats came together to enact a **BIPARTISAN** law that provided historic resources for violence prevention, law enforcement strategies, as well as

- Enhancing background checks for purchasers under 21
- Preventing domestic abusers from accessing guns
- Making the largest investment in youth mental health and CVI in history
- And making gun trafficking a federal crime, prosecuting over 600 traffickers

These strategies in partnership with local leadership reduced homicides by 31% and mass shootings by 20% in our country.

As our communities have been fighting our way out of this crisis, we find ourselves at a dangerous crossroad. Instead of federal resources to strengthen what works, the Trump administration has dismantled or defunded **BIPARTISAN** strategies passed into law that reduce violence.

- They shut down the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention
- Defunded law enforcement including the ATF
- Cut over \$1 billion in mental health resources from schools
- Terminated \$812 million in funding for violence intervention programs
- Defunded gun violence research and the CDC firearm injury center
- Dismantled important regulations like the zero tolerance policy for gun dealers
- And now plans to further defund critical resources like housing, health and employment programs that we know address the root causes of violence.

I live in southeast DC, one of the areas targeted by Trump's military takeover. To the Trump White House, my neighborhood has been called a "slum" — but to me it's home. Where we grill out in the summers, walk our dogs every morning, and like any neighborhood support each other as neighbors sharing community.

But since the DC Trump takeover, we hear sirens nightly, raids in residential buildings, elderly harassed on their porch, and even traffic jams from the flood of police and military. This deployment of federal troops holding families hostage in their homes from as far as Mississippi is not only ineffective but costly, projected to cost \$200 million.

This is not the federal support DC needs. We need a government that is tough on crime by preventing violence before it happens.

- To be tough on crime is for federal law enforcement to focus on preventing illegal guns from flooding our streets instead of patrolling them. 95% of guns traced to crimes in DC come from other states.
- To be tough on crime is funded by ATF to catch gun traffickers, shut down those rogue gun dealers and disrupt dangerous black markets selling illegal weapons and conversion devices to our communities.
- To be tough on crime is to protect and fund the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act
- TO BE TOUGH on crime is to shut down rogue gun dealers and hold manufacturers accountable
- To be tough on crime is to hold billionaires accountable who put guns meant for the battlefield in our backyards
- To be tough on crime is to fund CVI, mental health, school safety, victim services and strategies proven to reduce violence...

We have real solutions to save lives from gun violence and reduce violent crime, now is the time to protect that progress and build on the momentum.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to answering your questions.