



Los Angeles, San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco, Fresno, Sacramento,
Long Beach, Oakland, Bakersfield, Anaheim, Santa Ana, Riverside, Stockton

April 12, 2019

The Honorable Toni Atkins
President Pro Tem
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Atkins and Speaker Rendon:

As the mayors of the 13 largest cities in California, we are writing to express our appreciation to the Legislature for restoring violence prevention funding formerly available through CalGRIP, by allocating CalVIP funds in 2017 and 2018 in the amounts of \$9.125 and \$10 million, respectively. Additionally, we are grateful that Gov. Newsom has proposed that CalVIP funding continue in the 2019 budget. These resources are desperately needed if we are to make a demonstrable impact on the gun violence in California.

However, this level of funding is inadequate to address the serious issue of gun violence in the state and in particular in the urban communities representing our largest population centers. As mayors of our urban centers, we join community groups and faith leaders to urge California lawmakers to allocate at least \$39 million per year for at least three years for the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) grant program. We also advocate that direct funding be prioritized to urban communities that experience greater impacts as a result of gun violence. Cities in California have implemented some of the nation's most innovative and effective initiatives to break cycles of violence, trauma, and retaliation in their communities. But thus far, the State of California has provided only minimal funding to support and expand this lifesaving work. This year, a broad coalition of advocacy organizations, community and faith

leaders, and public officials is calling on state lawmakers to make California the nation's leader in investing in effective violence intervention initiatives.

The CalVIP grant program provides grants to cities and nonprofit organizations that implement evidence-based violence reduction initiatives in impacted communities. It has helped to fund highly successful, data-driven intervention initiatives, including:

- ***City of Oakland – Operation Ceasefire*** (52% reduction in shootings since 2012);
- ***City of Stockton – Operation Ceasefire*** (40% reduction in homicides and 31% reduction in nonfatal shootings since 2017);
- ***City of Los Angeles – The Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) Initiative in Los Angeles*** (credited with preventing hundreds of retaliatory shootings and saving taxpayers tens of millions in costs per year).

This program is supporting highly effective, lifesaving work. But its funding is woefully inadequate to meet our communities' needs. Funding for violence prevention has been static at approximately \$9 million annually since 2007. This amount pales in comparison to gun violence's enormous human, moral, and fiscal toll in our state. Nearly 9,000 Californians are shot per year and city and state taxpayers pay an estimated \$1.4 billion annually in direct costs for law enforcement, health care, and similar expenses in response to these tragedies.

In addition, California is lagging behind other states that are making a strong commitment to violence prevention. Massachusetts is spending more than twice as much as California on violence intervention initiatives for a state with 1/6th as many people and 1/14th as many shootings. While a \$39 million appropriation for CalVIP would not match Massachusetts's enormous per capita investment (that would require well over \$100 million in California), this amount would approximately match New York, which has cut its gun murder rate by a remarkable 41% since 2010. This would represent the largest investment in raw dollars any state has made in violence prevention to date and would make a clear statement about California's leading role in treating violence as a preventable public health and safety issue.

A \$39 million appropriation for CalVIP would allow California to meaningfully expand and replicate effective violence reduction strategies in urban communities throughout the state. This funding is critical for California to achieve the transformative progress other states have made against gun violence within the last decade—progress that has kept thousands of families and communities safer, healthy, and whole.

Sincerely,



Darrell Steinberg
Chair, Big City Mayors
Mayor, City of Sacramento



Eric Garcetti
Mayor, City of Los Angeles



Kevin Faulconer
Mayor, San Diego



Sam T. Liccardo
Mayor, City of San José



London Breed
Mayor, City of San Francisco



Lee Brand
Mayor, City of Fresno



Robert Garcia
Mayor, City of Long Beach



Libby Schaaf
Mayor, City of Oakland



Karen Goh
Mayor, City of Bakersfield



Harry Sidhu
Mayor, City of Anaheim



Miguel Pulido
Mayor, City of Santa Ana



Rusty Bailey
Mayor, City of Riverside



Michael Tubbs
City of Stockton

cc: Senator Pat Bates, Senate Republican Leader
Senator Shannon Grove, Senate Republican Leader-Elect
Assemblymember Marie Waldron
Assembly Republican Leader
Members of the Senate
Members of the Assembly