

Dedicate Federal Funding for Violence Interrupters

Neglected communities that suffer from low economic mobility often face disproportionate levels of violence. Traditionally, cities have responded to community-level violence by increasing the presence of a militarized police force. This solution has repeatedly failed with sometimes fatal consequences, compounding trauma and leading to more violence.

A new solution, one that comes from within the community itself, offers a new way forward: violence interrupters.

Violence interrupters help stem community-level violence by:

- » Coaching and assisting people in accessing social services.
- » Encouraging dialogue and averting violent, sometimes, deadly conflict.
- » Helping individuals attain key documents needed for employment and housing, such as state IDs, birth certificates, and social security cards.
- » Connecting individuals with mental health resources.
- » Building communal connections by visiting to school grounds and potential hotspots for violence.
- » Organizing community events to spread the message of nonviolence.

Violence interrupters usually come from the communities in which they serve. They typically have been previously incarcerated or involved with the criminal legal system, and they may have been deemed high-risk for violence in the past or have connections to people who are. This formula yields credibility and enables them to work effectively in the communities where they work.

Violence interrupter programs are experiencing a surge in popularity and success. The Cherry Hill neighborhood in Baltimore is a keen example—the violence interrupter program there enabled 365 days in the community without a single shooting. But program administrators worry about what could happen to funding for these programs in the future when interest wanes.

Please dedicate \$20 – 30 million in federal funding, via report language, for violence interrupters in the FY2023 appropriations bill.

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