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MAYOR ADAMS RELEASES BLUEPRINT TO END GUN VIOLENCE IN NEW YORK CITY

Plan Lays Out Short, Medium and Long-Term Action on Part of City, State, and Federal Governments

Includes Changes to State and Federal Laws, Enhanced NYPD and Mental Health Initiatives, Summer Employment Opportunities, More

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today released a “[Blueprint to End Gun Violence](#)” in New York City, which lays out numerous policy proposals Mayor Adams is seeking to implement to curb the scourge of gun violence plaguing New York City streets. The roadmap lays out Mayor Adams’ priorities to immediately address the crisis of guns on New York City streets.

“Gun violence is a public health crisis that continues to threaten every corner of our city,” said **Mayor Adams**. “We pray for all the victims of violence and their families who are suffering, but we are going to do more than pray — we’re going to turn our pain into purpose. Public safety is my administration’s highest priority, which is why we will remove guns from our streets, protect our communities, and create a safe, prosperous and just city for all New Yorkers.”

Mayor Adams’ roadmap calls for both intervention *and* prevention to end the gun violence epidemic affecting New York, and calls on the federal government and New York state to partner with his administration and other city entities to take immediate action to reduce gun violence.

Over the longer term, Mayor Adams also plans to transform New York City and address the root causes that lead to gun violence by growing economic opportunities, improving the education of city children, providing greater access to mental health support, and more.

Mayor Adams’ prepared remarks are as follows:

Good afternoon, New York.

In the last few weeks, we have seen an alarming rise in gun violence that has shocked our entire city.

In my three weeks as your mayor, I have been with an officer who was shot in the head as he slept in his own car. I have met with the mother of a 19-year-old girl who was killed as she worked the night shift in East Harlem. I have been at the bedside of a police officer who was shot by a 16-year-old as they struggled for a gun. I have seen a toddler's bloodstained pink jacket in the street. I have held hands and prayed with her mother. That 11-month-old baby was shot in the head by a gunman who didn't care where those bullets went.

And on Friday night, two officers were ambushed when they answered a routine domestic violence call. The suspect had a .45 in his hand and a loaded assault rifle under his mattress. NYPD Officer Jason Rivera was killed in the line of duty that Friday night, doing what he swore an oath to do: Protect the people of this city. We pray for him, his family, as well as for his partner, Officer Wilbert Mora, who remains in the hospital.

But, my fellow New Yorkers, we are going to do a lot more than pray. We are going to turn our pain into purpose. We are going to unite and take action. New Yorkers feel as if a sea of violence is engulfing our city. But as your Mayor, I promise you, I will not let this happen.

We will not surrender our city to the violent few. We are not going to go back to the bad old days. We are going to get trigger pullers off the streets and guns out of their hands.

I was a transit officer when we began to drive down crime in the 1990s. I am no stranger to this subject. I understand this from the inside and the outside. I know how to do this. New York has done it before.

Statistically, New York City is still the safest big city in America. But we are not going to be satisfied with statistics. This isn't about other cities. This is about New York City. Since the day I began running for the office of mayor, I knew that public safety was going to be our top priority.

As I have repeatedly said: Safety and justice are prerequisites for prosperity. That is why, since the moment I declared my candidacy, our team has been working on this public safety plan, and why we are sharing it with you now.

Today, we are releasing our "Blueprint to End Gun Violence." And I want to be clear: This is not just a plan for the future — it is a plan for right now. Gun violence is a public health crisis. There is no time to wait. We must act. The sea of violence comes from many rivers. We must dam EVERY river that feeds this greater crisis.

Our Blueprint to End Gun Violence addresses each one of these causes with both immediate interventions and long-term prevention strategies. It will involve the NYPD, every city agency, our courts, and the successful anti-violence Crisis Management System. We are going to involve every community, every precinct, and our state and federal partners.

New Yorkers will see and feel these changes quickly. We will ramp up enforcement, deploy more officers on the streets and in the subways, and get our courts at full capacity.

And we will invest in those longer-term preventions as well: Fixing our broken schools, supporting our unhoused New Yorkers, improving access to mental health services, and changing our laws.

From City Hall to our state legislatures to the halls of Congress, we need everyone to come together in common cause. We need help — we need resources — we need backup.

This is the gun that killed our young officer on Friday night. A 45-caliber modified gun. It is illegal to carry a gun in our city, yet our police officers take them off the street every day in record numbers.

Since January 1, our officers have taken 350 illegal guns off the street. Last year over 6,000 guns were confiscated. Our officers are doing heroic work getting guns off the street. But traffickers keep the guns coming. That must end. We must stop the flow of illegal guns into our city. The Iron Pipeline must be broken.

The NYPD is our first line of defense against gun violence. We will make new efforts to strengthen and reinforce it, while continuing our mission to involve the community.

We will start by putting more officers on patrol in key neighborhoods throughout the city. We will enhance existing Public Safety Units with new Neighborhood Safety Teams, which will focus on gun violence. We will launch these additional teams in the next three weeks, with deep focus on the 30 precincts where 80 percent of violence occurs, even as the Public Safety Units continue their lifesaving work.

In doing this, we will avoid mistakes of the past. These officers will be identifiable as NYPD, they will have body cameras, and they will have enhanced training and oversight.

We will also expand the partnership between the NYPD and New York State Police. We are already working with Governor Hochul's Public Safety team on reducing gun violence, sharing critical law enforcement data, and supporting the Interstate Gun Tracing Consortium.

There are no gun manufacturers in New York City. Yet, even as the NYPD removed over 6,000 guns from our streets last year, we know that new guns are arriving by car, by bus and by train every day. The NYPD will work with state law enforcement to implement spot checks at entry points like Port Authority and other bus and train stations.

We will also move forward on using the latest in technology to identify problems, follow up on leads, and collect evidence. From facial recognition technology to new tools that can spot those carrying weapons, we will use every available method to keep our people safe.

We will also expand the Gun Violence Suppression Division. This highly specialized unit within the Detectives Bureau is tasked with seizing illegal guns and building cases against gun sellers and weapons traffickers. And we will continue the Gun Violence Strategic Partnership, a daily

meeting that brings together local, state, and federal leaders to share intelligence and information on specific cases. And finally, my administration will increase coordination and information-sharing with the ATF, FBI, and all our federal partners.

Gun violence is not only a law enforcement issue. It is a social issue, a community issue, and we will be taking a citywide approach to meeting this challenge. New Yorkers have heard me say many times that any effective plan to reduce gun violence must include intervention AND prevention. We must take actions to immediately stop the violence, and we must make long-term investments to keep it from returning. We must address the root causes of these challenges and help our young people on a better path long before they pick up a gun.

That is why we are going to expand the successful anti-violence Crisis Management System and ensure they have the necessary resources to do their work. There will be a central point of contact at City Hall to help them navigate every single agency so that our city government is aligned and coordinated in support of their life-saving efforts. We will also enlist every city agency in promoting public safety. From Sanitation to Housing to Buildings, we will have boots on the ground on every block of this city.

That is why we will name a dedicated anti-gun violence coordinator in every city agency. These leaders will be dedicated to seeing the agency's work through the prism of gun violence and offering ideas and solutions to support broader public safety efforts. They will also act as a liaison between the agencies, the NYPD, the Crisis Management teams, and City Hall.

Just as we utilize precision policing, we must utilize precision prevention – reaching young people long before they turn to guns and violence. There are at least 250,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are out of school and out of work.

My Administration will launch an unprecedented Summer Youth Employment and Youth Engagement Program for Summer 2022, as we know that gang violence and gun crimes spike in the summer months. Part of this effort will include partnership with large businesses and corporations across the city, with a goal of identifying a paid internship opportunity for every young person who wants one.

It is important that I speak to you about the issue of our young people in foster care. Almost 3,000 young people are entrusted to our city through the foster care system, and about 500-600 age out of the system each year without a consistent adult to rely on. Only 21 percent of these young people have a high school degree or equivalency when they age out of foster care at 21. One out of every five enter a homeless shelter within three years of aging out.

Programs like our Fair Futures initiative provides life coaches for this vulnerable population through age 26, and we are going to expand these programs that help our youth get on the right path.

My administration will also use the city's enormous purchasing power to create job opportunities for New Yorkers because we know the best antidote to crime is a career. We will work with our partners in Albany, labor, and other trades to pass Community Hiring legislation

that will allow the city to require those doing business with us to hire New Yorkers from targeted communities, ensuring residents have access to good jobs and apprenticeships.

Social services are important in protecting our city, and nowhere is that more crucial than when it comes to the topic of mental health. Mental health and public safety go hand in hand. The mental health crisis in our city has worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it contributes directly to the crisis of gun violence. Our entire health care system must play a role in reducing gun violence, and we are going to make sure our hospitals and mental health professionals get the resources they need.

Our existing Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs are an important frontline response to those individuals who enter our hospital system with criminal or behavioral issues. These programs bring together hospital staff and law enforcement and community partners to provide support to violently injured people. Engaging patients in the hospital, during their recovery, is a real opportunity to improve lives and reduce retaliation and recidivism.

The Health Department will expand this Intervention Program to 10 additional hospitals in the communities experiencing high rates of gun violence. My administration will also redirect resources from the Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, formerly known as ThriveNYC, into areas of immediate need. This will include support for those experiencing homelessness on our streets, especially those in urgent need of mental health care.

We must also strengthen our legal response to those who are in active crisis and a danger to themselves and others. To serve them and protect others, we need a new system with comprehensive mental health support — especially through an infusion of federal support and funding. We need a humane and legally-informed response to people in need who refuse treatment, especially those with a documented history of violence.

We can't continue to allow those who could pose a danger to themselves or others to remain untreated. We need our state and federal partners to fund these crucial resources including hospital beds and trained support staff.

And finally, we will create a Quality of Life Task Force that will include senior leaders of the NYPD, DSNY, and DHS, as well as mental health experts and additional city leaders as needed. The mission of this Task Force will be to have law enforcement and mental health professionals work together in areas where the homeless and mentally ill congregate, and make sure they are being offered the resources they need.

Each of these steps will make a critical difference. But city government alone cannot solve a crisis that has reached across our nation.

We will need support from New York state, federal partners, district attorneys, the U.S. Southern & Eastern District Courts, as well as all New Yorkers. I express my thanks to Governor Kathy Hochul and the entire New York state Legislature for their support of our city in this time of crisis. Your partnership going forward is critical, and I know we can work together to swiftly

enact legislation and promote policies that will make it easier for our city to prosecute gun crimes.

The Interstate Task Force on Illegal Guns is an important first step. But we must also address bail reform and our pretrial detention system.

First: We must allow judges to take dangerousness into account. New York is the only state in the country that does not allow a judge to detain a defendant who poses a threat to the community.

49 other states, as well as the federal government, allow judges to consider a defendant's dangerousness. New York must catch up.

Judges must be able to evaluate a defendant's criminal history and the circumstances of the alleged crime to detain those individuals who pose a threat to the safety of the community. We must also look at "Raise the Age" legislation, which is being used as a loophole for gang members to demand young people under 18 take the fall for guns that are not theirs. My Administration is not seeking to punish young people – but when it comes to guns, we must make sure there are consequences.

Far too many men above the age of 18 are victimizing children by forcing them to carry the weapons. This is evidenced by the statistics.

- *In 2019, 2.5 percent of all youths under 18 who were arrested had a firearm.*
- *In 2021, that number was 10 percent.*
- *Children are being used as pawns.*

If a 16- or 17-year-old is arrested on a gun charge, the NYPD should ask the individual where they got the gun from. If the individual refuses to disclose that information prosecutors should have the ability to charge the individual in Criminal Court, rather than Family Court.

We must also re-examine the 2019 reforms to the discovery process. We must allow district attorneys to move forward EARLIER with gun charges, removing disclosure requirements that jam up the process, and we urge the state to pass legislation to that effect.

And finally, we MUST raise the penalty for gun trafficking. Currently, a gun trafficker on our streets won't face a Class B felony until they sell 10 guns in a one-year period. We need to lower that number to three. And if you are in possession of three or more guns, this should be presumptive evidence of gun trafficking, not just possession.

And when I, as mayor, make judicial appointments, this will be a top priority and consideration: Those who demonstrate a commitment to keeping violent criminals who use guns off New York City streets.

Our city is coming out of a long period of uncertainty and trauma. The pandemic has frayed the social safety net at every level, and has had a lasting and damaging impact on our justice system. Our court system is operating at a fraction of its previous capacity, and it has put our communities at risk. In the first half of 2019, New York City courts rendered 405 criminal verdicts. In the first half of 2021, these same courts rendered only 18. There is currently a backlog of 4,000 gun cases in the New York state court system.

To our lawyers, our legal aids, our defenders: I strongly encourage ALL of us to get back to work. And we must immediately look at the things that are holding us up including changing the current social distancing requirements.

Already in our public schools, we have moved from a six-foot rule to a three-foot rule. If it's good enough for our children, it should be good enough for ALL of us. The current rules are causing us to use two courtrooms for one trial. Changing these rules would allow juries to sit together in one courtroom and expand court capacity.

We must also immediately work through the DNA testing backlog that has held up too many gun cases. This must be done by any means necessary, including use of forfeiture funds or federal stimulus money.

Our city's five district attorneys are critical partners in public safety efforts, and we are asking them to also consider the following actions.

First: We ask that they triage gun charges to expedite the process. If a District Attorney's office pursues a charge related to gang or gun violence, moving it to the front of the docket — much the same way hospitals triage patients with life-threatening conditions ahead of those less in need — it would serve as a crucial step towards getting guns off our streets, faster.

We also propose a weekly meeting between all five district attorneys, the deputy mayor of public safety, and the police commissioner to review issues from the previous week, highlight needs, and identify the best ways to support each other moving forward.

Finally: We will work with the courts and chief judge to see if we can increase the number of judges who are part of the State's gun violence initiative. We need every judge we can get hearing these cases and helping us move through this immense backlog.

Everything I have spoken of so far will make a difference in how we can keep our city safe from guns. But no matter how effectively we get guns off our streets, more just keep coming in. The Iron Pipeline keeps them coming. The gun violence crisis has hit New York City painfully, but we are far from alone. In the wake of COVID, major cities and localities nationwide have seen alarming rises in shootings, gun incidents, and violence. Gun violence is a public health crisis. And it is one that must be addressed at every level of government.

It is time for our federal leaders to rise to the occasion and pass common-sense legislation that is supported by an overwhelming majority of Americans. In addition to enhancing partnerships

with federal law enforcement described above, we must see immediate action from Congress on guns:

We must pass legislation requiring background checks on all gun sales. We must pass legislation to make gun trafficking a federal crime. We must increase penalties for those directly involved in moving guns across state lines, and the organizers of gun trafficking rings. We must increase penalties for those making straw purchases, or buying firearms from someone legally prohibited from doing so. And we must also mobilize the DOJ against the proliferation of ghost guns.

These actions are only a start. But they will create critical momentum that will help New York City and all cities.

We have a great deal of support in Washington for our cause. I am thankful for all the support we have gotten from President Joe Biden and his entire administration. He understands what is at stake. But with an opposition party who is dedicated to only that — opposition — we must find other ways.

As I said to my fellow mayors in DC last week:

Cities must lead. Mayors must lead. We are proud to be a member of Mayors Against Illegal Guns, and we must all work together. As your mayor: This is my number one priority: Keeping you safe. I campaigned on it; I will deliver on it.

This Blueprint to End Gun Violence will not end this crisis overnight, but it will represent the biggest action in years to protect New York City by marshalling the collective action of many stakeholders and massive resources. My administration will push to implement this plan in the coming weeks and months with our partners in Albany and Washington, D.C. We will never stop fighting to protect New Yorkers.

New York City has come a long way. We did a lot of hard work to become America's safest big city. And we are not going let that slip away. Not on my watch. You have my word, as your mayor, and as a fellow New Yorker.

On Friday, Officer Jason Rivera will be laid to rest. I will be there. As a city, we will mourn together. We will celebrate his life and pay tribute to his heroism. And in his memory, and in the memory of all those who have been killed by gun violence, we will rise again.

Rise up to protect each other. Rise up to defeat gun violence. Rise up to defend the way of peace and the work of prosperity. This is our moment, New York.

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