

JOHN 
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G O V E R N O R

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE
POLICY**



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Delawareans across the state want safe neighborhoods where they can raise their families and schools and where their children are free from the threat of violence. Employers want to grow their businesses in places where their employees and customers feel safe. To do that, we need to deploy our resources with more of a focus on keeping dangerous, violent criminals off our streets. We also need to shift toward rehabilitating non-violent offenders and helping them become employed and productive members of society. Even more important is preventing our young people from turning to a life of crime in the first place.

As a 30-year resident of the City of Wilmington, past chairman of the State's Criminal Justice Council and a former member of the Board of Pardons, I recognize there are no quick or easy solutions. I have met with community members, law enforcement officials, ex-offenders, and school leaders to gather ideas for improving our criminal justice system. With that input, I have a plan to make Delaware a safer place to live, work and attend school.

AS GOVERNOR, I WOULD PRIORITIZE:

- I. Targeting resources on high-risk offenders and hot spot areas**
- II. Building the relationship between the community and law enforcement**
- III. Giving educators and kids better tools and opportunities**
- IV. Equipping those reentering society with the tools to succeed**
- V. Providing better access to mental health care and drug and alcohol rehabilitation**

I. TARGETING OUR RESOURCES ON HIGH-RISK OFFENDERS AND HOT SPOT AREAS

Most of the suspects and some of the victims in the rash of shootings that have plagued our state in recent years are well known to law enforcement, with significant histories of violence and serious criminal activity. Law enforcement officials and community leaders alike have told me there are a relatively small number of criminals committing a large percentage of the violent crime in this state. In fact, the Criminal Justice Council reported that of the shootings that occurred in 2014, 76% of victims and 79% of suspects had at least one felony arrest. In addition, research and analysis from Temple University and the University of Delaware make it clear there are certain areas and times of the day where much of this violence is perpetrated. If we want to make significant progress in reducing violence, we need a sustained focus on high-risk individuals and the targeted areas where the violence is taking place.

As Governor, I will:

CREATE BETTER PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN STATE AGENCIES AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

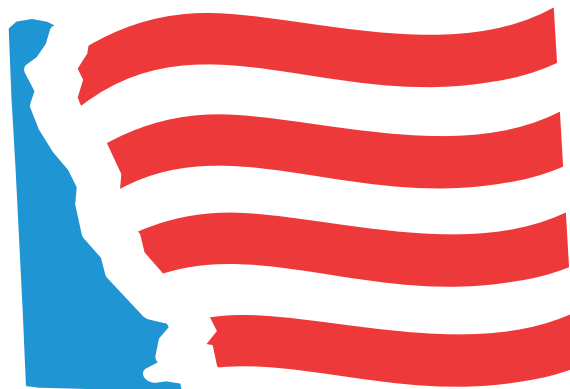
Tackling violent crime takes true teamwork -- we need better partnerships among state agencies and local law enforcement agencies. For example, many of the individuals involved in recent shootings have been on adult or juvenile probation. We need coordination and cooperation between state agencies and law enforcement to ensure a proper and sustained focus on these high-risk offenders. For example, in the City of Wilmington we need to recommit to a robust deployment of the successful Safe Streets initiative, with more Wilmington Police Officers teaming up with Probation Officers on a daily basis. We also need a new approach that is focused on serious, violent juvenile offenders and includes dedicated juvenile Probation Officers working directly with Wilmington Police Officers.

SUPPORT SIGNIFICANT AND CONSISTENT DEPLOYMENT IN HOT SPOT COMMUNITIES

Establishing a consistent and significant community policing presence in these hot spot communities is critical to reducing violence and building the credibility of law enforcement. Having police officers deployed into specific neighborhoods, out of their cars and walking the beat is vital to sustaining success. At the state level, we need to leverage the resources we provide to local law enforcement to ensure this type of deployment. For example, the Department of Corrections should assume lock-up and processing responsibility for local police departments to help free-up local law enforcement resources for a full, community policing deployment.

MAKE DETENTIONS DECISIONS BASED ON RISK

It is also critical that our criminal justice system focus more on risk-based detention decisions. Too often, dangerous violent offenders in the drug trade are released back into the community on bail, while non-violent offenders without the financial means to make bail languish in prison. Detention decisions need to be made with an eye to ensuring our limited correctional resources are being utilized to keep us safe.



II. BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Fostering trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve is critical to any public safety strategy. I believe every citizen wants to be safe and free from the devastating impact of violence. Thus, there is an alignment of interests between the community and law enforcement that should foster trust and mutual respect. However, this trust does not happen by accident. It requires a consistent commitment to engage the community and solve real issues and problems of mutual concern.

As Governor, I will:

ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY POLICING STRATEGIES

Whether it's grants or other mechanisms, we need to facilitate full commitment to community policing, especially in some of our most troubled neighborhoods. A full commitment to a deployment structure that focuses on and values proactively policing neighborhoods and empowering community police officers to solve community problems is critical. We must move away from respond-and-react policing and get back to policing our neighborhoods. We need an approach that engages the community and relies on community members to work with police in identifying criminals and illegal activity.

REVIEW AND REVISE POLICE TRAINING TO EMPHASIZE DE-ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE

Delaware provides excellent training for our law enforcement officers, which must continue, but we also need to take a fresh look at the training we provide to ensure that we are striking the right balance when it comes to confronting potentially violent situations. To that end, we must ensure that our officers have the latest and most up-to-date training when it comes to de-escalating potentially violent encounters with members of our community.



As Governor, I plan to work closely with the Council on Police Training and retain national experts to conduct a comprehensive review of our training protocols to look for areas of improvement.

ENHANCE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

For years, law enforcement agencies have been utilizing a respond-and-react orientation and structure that focuses on resolving calls for service rather than proactively engaging the community and implementing crime reduction strategies. Other jurisdictions have found great success when law enforcement shifts back to policing in neighborhoods and actively engaging the community. By doing so in a consistent and sustained manner, including empowering officers to partner with the community to solve problems, credibility and legitimacy between the police and the community is enhanced and resource allocation is more closely aligned with the needs of the community.

USE TECHNOLOGY MORE EFFECTIVELY

Technological advances can dramatically improve the effectiveness of law enforcement and reduce violence in our communities, but it must be deployed thoughtfully and consistently. For example, cameras and license plate reader technology can help prevent criminal activity, solve crimes and enhance the safety of law enforcement and the community alike, but it is critical there be interoperability of technology across the law enforcement community. Whether it's the Delaware State Police, New Castle County Police Department or Wilmington Police Department, we need to ensure that all of our officers have access to and can benefit from these technological advances.

III. GIVING EDUCATORS AND KIDS BETTER TOOLS AND OPPORTUNITIES

One particularly disturbing trend in the rise of violent crime is the increasing involvement of juveniles in carrying guns involved in shooting incidents. Researchers have also pinpointed the times where most of the violence occurs, peaking after school lets out until around 11:00 PM. The lack of educational, recreational and employment opportunities, coupled with easily accessible firearms, is leading too many young people from school to prison, and we need to stop this trend.

As Governor, I will:

EXPAND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Studies have consistently shown that children from troubled households and communities prosper when provided a safe, nurturing environment to learn and develop. Too often, we make progress with these children in our schools only to lose ground once school lets out and they return to dysfunctional families and dangerous neighborhoods. We need to expand after school programs to include instruction and recreation after school, on the weekends and in the summer, so these kids can have safe and secure places to learn and develop.

INCREASE HOURS AT COMMUNITY CENTERS

Children also need a safe haven in the communities where they live, and community centers can play an important role in that regard. Whether it is the local YMCA, a PAL center or a faith-based recreational facility, we need to ensure these opportunities are welcoming and available for children year-round, particularly in known hot spot areas where violent crime is more prevalent.

REQUIRE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE UNTIL 18 YEARS OF AGE

The link between education and crime is well established, with a significant number of our prisoners failing to complete high school and reading at elementary school levels. It is also increasingly clear that when kids are not in school, the likelihood of them getting involved in criminal activity increases substantially. Currently, children are legally permitted to drop out of school at 16 years of age. We need to require kids to attend school until they are 18 years old.

CREATE A VIOLENCE PREVENTION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Borrowing from successful programs in other states, we need to incorporate violence prevention educational programs in our schools. Whether it's bullying in schools, domestic violence at home or violent assaults in the community, these traumatic experiences affect children in terms of their physical and emotional development, as well as their propensity to perpetrate violence on others. We need programs in our schools that help interrupt this cycle of violence, including partnering with healthcare professionals and the like to diminish the impact of these incidents.

Too often we expect our teachers to solve problems in our community that go far beyond learning in the classroom. While we need troubled youth to remain in school and have access to after-school programming, we also must recognize that teachers need tools and alternatives in place to make sure that disruptive children do not undermine the work of the entire class. To do that, I propose:

IMPROVING RECOGNITION AND ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA

Research has revealed the significant impact traumatic childhood experiences have on children's educational and behavioral development, whether it be domestic violence or violence in the community. We need to better train our teachers and counselors to recognize the erratic behavior that is often a symptom of the toxic stress children have endured. We also need to partner with mental and physical health professionals to provide appropriate interventions to help diminish the impact of these events.

INSTITUTING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVES

In some neighborhoods, our schools are located in the community and can be utilized for more than traditional classroom construction. We need to do a better job of bringing some of the important services the state offers directly to these schools. From children's mental health to cognitive therapy services or addiction counseling to creating a better nexus between the schools and the community -- by providing these types of services at the schools can help improve access to and the delivery of these important services.

IV. EQUIPPING THOSE REENTERING SOCIETY WITH THE TOOLS TO SUCCEED

One of the most common attributes of those incarcerated in our prisons is very low education attainment and poor job skills. Simply put, when many of the offenders in our prisons cannot read at a third grade level and have no marketable job skills, the chances of success upon reentry into society are not good. We need better educational programs and job training initiatives in our prisons if we are going to reduce recidivism and make our communities safer.

As Governor, I will:

IMPROVE THE PRISON EDUCATION SYSTEM

Delaware's prison education system needs to be restructured to provide additional instruction, including a more flexible regulatory scheme by the Department of Education. The practical realities of operating a secure facility present unique challenges in terms of providing educational services. The traditional 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM, five days a week model does not allow for maximum instruction time. We need additional educational resources and more flexibility in deploying those resources.

ENHANCE JOB-TRAINING INITIATIVES

Their lack of marketable skills, coupled with their criminal history, makes it very difficult to secure and retain employment for many offenders once they are released from prison. Too often, offenders lack the basic skills to compete for job opportunities, including how to apply for and interview for a job. We need to ensure that every offender released from our prison has these basic skills and we need to provide more specific job training in areas that realistically can translate into job opportunities upon release.

ADD THE DIVISION OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION TO THE I-ADAPT MEMBERSHIP TO ASSIST EXITING INMATES IN OBTAINING PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

The Individual Assessment, Discharge and Planning Team (I-ADAPT) was assembled to help ease the transition for inmates leaving prison, with the goal of reducing recidivism. The group has connected over 2,000 exiting inmates with housing, job training, education, and other social services. Currently, I-ADAPT includes representatives from the departments of Correction, Labor, Education, the State Housing Authority, DHSS and the Criminal Justice Council. The Division of Professional Regulation is not currently part of I-ADAPT. As Governor, I would follow the recommendation of the Delaware Professional Licensing Review Committee to include the Division of Professional Regulation, since difficulty getting a license for professions they are otherwise qualified for is a clear impediment to employment for ex-offenders.

LESSEN BARRIERS TO LICENSING FOR EX-OFFENDERS

Right now, licensing boards are allowed to consider criminal convictions with no statute of limitations. This practice restricts too many ex-offenders who have already paid for their crimes and no longer pose a threat to society. In an effort to ease the re-entry process, I will work to enact the following recommended changes to licensing statutes:

1. Restrict the "look-back" period for most convictions older than 10 years, or for which 10 years has elapsed from the time of incarceration, assuming there have been no other criminal convictions in the meantime.
2. Reduce the waiting period for applying for a license after a criminal conviction.
3. Give licensing boards more flexibility in looking at each case individually and granting licenses when appropriate.

V. PROVIDING BETTER ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE AND DRUG AND ALCOHOL REHABILITATION

Many people have found themselves part of our criminal justice system primarily due to drug or alcohol addictions and/or mental health issues. By providing better access to mental health and addiction treatment, we address the root causes of criminal activity and provide safer communities for everyone. The reality is that most people in our prisons ultimately get released back into the community, so providing better access to these treatments will not only improve their lives, it will make us all safer.

As Governor, I will:

USE MORE EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT TOOLS TO BETTER MATCH UP OFFENDERS WITH THE SERVICES THEY NEED

One of the biggest obstacles to ensuring that offenders get the treatment they need is accurately and effectively assessing each offender's need for addiction treatment and/or mental health services. Effective tools now exist to accurately assess the need for addiction and mental health treatment, as well as the type of treatment, on an individualized basis. We need to better utilize these tools to focus our resources on those who need these interventions.

PROVIDE BETTER ACCESS TO DRUG TREATMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

It is not enough to properly assess the needs of offenders. We need to be able to deliver the services required by the needs assessment. This means increasing the quantity and quality of the drug treatment and mental health services in our prisons. We need to recognize this is an investment in public safety -- most offenders in our prisons are going to be released back to our communities, and we are all safer if the underlying issues that led them there in the first place, whether it's related to addiction or mental health, are addressed.

