
Public Hearing

before

ASSEMBLY TASK FORCE ON ADOLESCENT VIOLENCE

*“Testimony from members of the clergy,
certain non-profit organizations, and representatives of the
academic community on how to combat youth violence”*

LOCATION: Committee Room 16
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: November 24, 1998
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF TASK FORCE PRESENT:

Assemblyman Paul DiGaetano, Chairman
Assemblyman Tom Smith, Vice Chairman
Assemblyman Samuel D. Thompson
Assemblyman Guy F. Talarico
Assemblywoman Mary T. Previte



ALSO PRESENT:

William G. Double
Office of Legislative Services
Task Force Aide

Deborah K. Smarth
Tasha M. Kersey
Assembly Majority
Task Force Aides

Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
**The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Morris Jenkins, Ph.D. Assistant Professor Administration of Justice Penn State Abington College Abington Township, Pennsylvania	2
Reverend Floyd L. White III Pastor Woodland Presbyterian Church, and President Woodland Community Development Corporation	7
David Meltz Executive Vice President Wings Consulting Group	17
Reverend Edward Ducree President Wings Consulting Group	17
Marilyn Williams Executive Vice President Wings Consulting Group	21
Richard Pompelio, Esq. Founder and Executive Director New Jersey Crime Victims' Law Center	30
Kevin Ryan, Esq. General Counsel and Director Youth Advocacy Center Covenant House New Jersey	37
Jacquelyn Steadman, Esq. Staff Attorney Covenant House New Jersey	39
Doug Reichert Multiprogram Director Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Metuchen	47

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Richard J. Watson Senior Probation Counselor Alternatives to Detention Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Metuchen	51
Steve Berry Program Director Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Metuchen	52
Reverend Frank Collazo President and Executive Director Youth Challenge of New York and New Jersey	53
Reverend Paul Sears Program Director Youth Challenge of New Jersey and New York	56
Reverend Richard Starling Senior Pastor Christ Church of Newark	59
Jeannette Haviland-Jones, Ph.D. University Professor Rutgers University	64
Reverend Bryant Ali Director of Pastoral Care Broadway House for Continuing Care	72
Bryan Miller Executive Director Ceasefire New Jersey	78

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Page

APPENDIX:

Presentation
submitted by
Morris Jenkins, Ph.D.

1x

Statement
submitted by
Reverend Frank Collazo

14x

dmt: 1-82

ASSEMBLYMAN PAUL DiGAETANO (Chairman): Ladies and gentlemen, if you are interested in testifying today, we ask that you fill out one of the witness forms to your right, my left. For anyone who may not have read the sign, this is the Assembly Task Force on Adolescent Violence. We have a number of speakers, some of whom have called in and some of whom are carryovers from our last hearing. If you kindly give us your attention, we would like to begin and--

Why don't we first start by calling the roll, take attendance of the committee (*sic*). Assemblyman Talarico is in the building, I saw him, and he will be joining us shortly.

MS. KERSEY (Majority Aide): Do you want me to do it on the microphone?

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Please.

MS. KERSEY: Chairman DiGaetano.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Here.

MS. KERSEY: Vice Chair, Assemblyman Smith.

ASSEMBLYMAN SMITH: Here.

MS. KERSEY: Assemblyman Thompson.

ASSEMBLYMAN THOMPSON: Present.

MS. KERSEY: Assemblyman Talarico.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: He is in the building, he will be up momentarily.

MS. KERSEY: Assemblyman Luongo. (no response)
Assemblywoman Previte.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Here.

MS. KERSEY: Assemblyman Zisa. (no response)

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Okay, thank you very much.

We will be asking our witnesses, or our speakers, here today to confine their testimony to five to ten minutes. We would then ask that you accept questions from the Committee.

We have quite a list of witnesses here to testify, so I would welcome anyone who wants to submit written testimony, and I assure you that that will be distributed to all the members of the Committee, even if you don't have sufficient copies, for their digestion.

Beginning on our list, and I will just read the first couple of names so you have an idea of the order-- We will first hear from Dr. Morris Jenkins, Dr. Jeannette Haviland-Jones, then Reverend Bryant Ali, and then Reverend Frank Collazo. So if I have not read your name, you are not one of the first four witnesses. If you have to leave the room for any reason, please feel free to do so.

So, Dr. Jenkins, would you please come forward. Press the button on the microphone, and if the red light is illuminated that indicates that your microphone is on.

MORRIS JENKINS, Ph.D.: Good morning, Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Good morning.

DR. JENKINS: Good morning, Vice Chair and the members of the Assembly. It is a privilege and an honor to be here, but I wish we could be here on other circumstances. I'm basically here to just talk about the role of faith-based institutions in violence prevention and a couple of theories and practices that are in place already throughout the United States that could be applicable here in New Jersey.

And the first-- I have some written testimony here if people want it. I'm going to try not to be too much of an academic because I know we professors can be boring sometimes, and I'm on a leave of absence so-- (laughter) Now, the first concept -- and I don't want to belabor the points about what's happening in the nation. We already know the statistics. We know that there is violence. Even though violence is decreasing, the level of violence is still unacceptable. And we know that there is a disproportionate amount of minorities in facilities all over the nation, including here in New Jersey, and what I'm going to bring forth are a couple of ideas.

Restorative justice is a first, commonly referred to as the balance proposed to justice. I think that faith-based institutions should play an integral role in this process. Under restorative justice, we bring the victim, the offender, and the community together to try to heal. Instead of viewing crime as a breaking of law, we view crime as a distortion of the community. And the role of restorative justice is to bring the community together, to heal the community, to heal the offender, to heal the victim.

But more importantly, I think that legislative support for restorative justice will also improve relationships between communities, especially disenfranchised communities, and the criminal justice system. This process allows for the community to have input in crime prevention efforts. Also, restorative justice would also allow for the criminal justice system to deal with other issues, more pressing issues, or to deal with the overburden of the courts.

When we talk about restorative justice, most programs deal with the vast majority of crimes. We all know that the vast majority of crimes that are committed, especially if you look at the UCR, are not crimes to the person,

but other types of crimes. And restorative justice is a good process to deal with that issue.

The role of faith-based institutions is very, very integral in this process. Traditionally, especially in African-American communities, the church has been at the forefront of social issues, of social problems. And with that, restorative justice would be a proper vehicle for the church to be involved.

The second issue that I wanted to bring out is a little more controversial, but I think it is very, very important to bring forth because of the issue of crime in the African-American community. Afrocentric theory, which is very, very similar to the process of restorative justice-- Again, the process of Afrocentric theory calls for healing of the community, and it also calls for a change in the culture. By that I mean a change in the community culture and a change in the individual. Under Afrocentric theory the assumption is that there has been a problem with many of our African-American youth with reference to trying to adjust to the Eurocentric approach in this country.

Under Afrocentric, the process -- and most of the time it's referred to as a right of process -- the process allows for the community to heal, it allows for the community to get a better sense of -- instead of individualism, a better sense of communitarianism. Again the churches, the mass, the synagogues, and all communities can play a part.

Now, one of the criticisms is that most folks feel that Afrocentric theory is anti-European or anti-white. I would like to bring out it is not. And also the process is not only one that comes out of Africa, but it's also a process that has been used by many, many traditional cultures, including European, Australians, and Asian cultures. By combining both, this would allow for the

community to have a voice in fighting crime and violence, and it also allows for the community to be a part of the healing process.

Another issue, and I'll end with this, that is brought out when we talk either about restorative justice or, more importantly, Afrocentric theory is the concept of spirituality. I'd like to bring out that spirituality is not the same as religion. I'm looking at it from a legal standpoint because I hear a lot of criticism about, are we going to violate the First Amendment? I bring it out in what I wrote. The establishment clause is the primary thing one should look at when we talk about this issue. If the legislature backs a program like this, are we establishing a religion? I brought it out to the Supreme Court, and in many cases it said no.

By dealing with spirituality it allows for a healing. And by dealing with spirituality, you don't have to rely basically on a "religion." It's a process that includes religion, but also includes other aspects of our culture. Now, there is one body of law that views spirituality as a "religion," and I think we should be aware of that.

I didn't bring it out, but I think I should bring it out now. That a couple of courts across the nation has determined that Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous is a religion. Basically, they gave, probation for DUIs, AA as a condition of probation. In that case, it was the only condition of probation. And in those cases, one in New York and one in California -- district court on the state level and a district court on the Federal level -- stated that Alcoholics Anonymous is a religion for establishing clause purposes.

However, you can get around it by providing options, by providing other alternatives. So when we think about restorative justice or we think

about Afrocentric theory as a process in the role of faith-based organizations, we can't ignore the First Amendment. However, by looking at it as spirituality instead of religion, I think that we can overcome the obstacles that may occur because of the First Amendment.

And in conclusion, alternatives are, I think, the best way of dealing with a lot of the crime and violence that occurs in our communities -- prevention is the best way. I brought about two intervention processes because I think sometimes we ignore people already in the system. By using this, we can not only allow for the victim to have a voice and the community to have a voice, but also the offender may be able to get another chance.

So with that I will conclude and take questions.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you, Dr. Jenkins.

Any questions from committee members? (no response)

Thank you very much for your testimony.

Next we will hear from Dr. Jeannette Haviland-Jones. Is Dr. Jones in the room? (no response)

Okay, Reverend Bryant Ali. (no response) Not in the room either.

Okay, coming up together, I assume, from the New Jersey Youth Challenge, Reverend Frank Collazo and Reverend Paul Sears. (no response)

We are doing well, folks.

Okay, Reverend Richard Starling, Christ Church of Newark. (no response)

Reverend Floyd L. White, Woodland Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Thank you, Reverend, you saved me. (laughter) I was beginning to lose faith.

REVEREND FLOYD L. WHITE III: There is a God.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you.

Good morning.

REVEREND WHITE: Good morning. I'm Reverend Floyd White III. I'm the pastor at the Woodland Presbyterian Church, in the city of Camden, and also the President of the Woodland Community Development Corporation, which is a subproduct of our programmatic activity in the city.

When we think about youth violence and problems that we have throughout our community, we think about the faith-based community being intimately involved. In Camden City, we have 87,000 people, fifth-poorest city in the nation. We realize that the medium income is about \$7200 per family. We have a deep-rooted, systemic problem in our city, and we are concerned about that. And as we work through the corporation, the Woodland Community Development Corporation and the church really want to be intimately involved in these particular problems.

Through the corporation and the church, we have somewhere in between 12 to 14 programs. We have a Girls Club for girls aged 13 to 17 years old. They meet every second and fourth Sunday to talk about conflict resolution and problems that we have. We have an Eighth Street Club, kids 12 and under, it's five years old. Kids meet three times a week and talk about problems that are impacting our community.

I think the largest thing that I really want to lift up as we talk about these problems is a program that we have right now. When we think about youth violence, we think about it throughout time it's going to get greater and greater. Robert Wood Johnson is doing an evaluation of juvenile youth violence and things of that nature, and it's probably going to get a greater increase as the years progress.

One of the things we've done in Camden is we went to the foundation and we established an after-school tutorial program. It's about three months old. It's in three schools in the city of Camden. It's been endorsed by the school board. It's been endorsed by the faith-based community. It's a program where we have staff on board from the school, instructional assistance, as well as teachers. What we do is we meet from October to May, 3:00 to 4:30. We have tutorial, academic type of style, arts, as well as drug prevention education. That's one piece. The other piece is to get the parents involved in what we are going to be doing in a city like Camden, understanding that there are some deep-rooted, systemic problems that might not go away tomorrow.

Now, if you think about recommendations in terms of the government entity and government intervention, obviously the church, government, schools can't do it independent of each other. We have to understand that it is going to take a cooperative partnership. We're talking about State, government, school, and the faith-based community. I think that in lieu of placing a lot of money in government agencies that might not have a tremendous impact on communities, we need to think about how we can have some accountability and make folks responsible across the board for dollars that might be coming out.

If I were sitting in your shoes, so to speak, if we were talking about curbing youth violence and we are talking about community-based type of organizations, we will look at the schools. Obviously, they have discretionary funds that are available to do programs. I tell people all the time, if I got \$10,000, I can give you a \$30,000 turnaround because I have volunteers involved in all of our programs.

So if you talk about youth violence, think about being involved across the board with some of our youth centers. We're working with the police. We're working with the prosecutor down in Camden County right now setting up a juvenile conference committee where we can have alternatives to kids who might be in trouble with the law.

I think finally in my comments I really think that we have to go back to the basics, way back to the beginning, to talk to children about the dynamics of youth violence and to talk to children about what is going on. When I think about a deep-rooted, systemic problem, it begins at home, and we understand that, and I think the faith-based community can have an impact across the board. And we are going to be involved in the process in the next few years to have a tremendous impact of what goes on in Camden City as well as other urban areas throughout the state.

Subject to your questions, this concludes my brief synopsis of my program and things of that nature.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you, Reverend White.

Any questions?

Assemblyman Thompson.

ASSEMBLYMAN THOMPSON: It's obvious you have a number of very worthwhile programs out there that you sponsor. One of the biggest problems faced in the circumstances is how to get, on a voluntary basis, the youth most at risk to participate in these programs. Do you have any suggestions that you might offer in that regard?

REVEREND WHITE: Sir, right now we are in the process of setting up Boy Scout units in the housing developments in the city of Camden. A new director came on board about a month ago. I know him from a previous

relationship. So we are getting right in there to work through Boy Scouts. Obviously, most people would say the Boy Scout's concept would be more European America. I don't believe that. I think the mere fact that it's just a flamboyant type of youth group with suits on, so to speak-- So what we are going to do in the housing developments throughout the city of Camden -- from the south side, to the east side, we are going to try to set up troops in there, bring in the youth who are at risk involved in the process to be a part of that.

One of my programs, again, explores-- Post Troop 44 -- we call it Adopt a Lot. Right there, around the church, twice a month we clean lots -- physically clean lots -- and the kids who are in my youth group -- 10 to 15 kids -- are probably not the most intellectual or kind kids that you would see, but they come out twice a month. They are in my youth choir. We physically clean lots within a one-block radius of my church, you can't see a piece of paper. We cut grass and things of that nature.

I think we have to have an opportunity to motivate children and to use some things that probably you and I knew about a long time ago. You take a lawn mower and a trash bag and you motivate those kids to be involved in something productive. And what are we doing? We are teaching them accountability, we are teaching them responsibility, and it doesn't take a whole lot of money. Our Adopt a Lot Program is about \$1000 per summer for our children. So those are some of the type of things that we are trying to do.

ASSEMBLYMAN THOMPSON: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Assemblyman, ViceChairman Smith.

ASSEMBLYMAN SMITH: I happen to know your new director of your housing authority, and he's done a good job up in our area in Long Branch.

REVEREND WHITE: Dave Brown.

ASSEMBLYMAN SMITH: Dave Brown.

REVEREND WHITE: Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN SMITH: But also he made use of the Boys and Girls Clubs to a great extent in his housing authority units, which has shown that has been a plus rather than a minus. He also started a Boy Scout troop in Long Branch in the housing authority.

REVEREND WHITE: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN SMITH: So if anyway you are going to reach these young people, you have to do it by these types of organizations.

REVEREND WHITE: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYMAN SMITH: And we have found that the Girls and Boys Clubs have been the most effective in reaching out to these young people.

REVEREND WHITE: Absolutely. I think that he has done an exceptional job with drug elimination programs. We are going to be involved in that drug prevention where we will take some folks from the Community Development Corporation who will certify up to the school board to reach out in that community to provide an aggressive curriculum in terms of self-esteem and things of that nature.

And what we do across the board with those types of programs is we have attendance rosters for our children in our youth program, for our tutorial program, and if they meet all attendance requirements, we have a reward system. We took 64 kids skating at Deptford Skating a couple of

weeks ago. I have taken children out hundreds of times. Obviously, the first time I took those kids out -- the first time out -- 20 minutes into the skating one of my kids broke his ankle. That's the way it goes, I guess.

ASSEMBLYMAN SMITH: Let me say this, though, but also with these young people the greatest thing is to give them hope. A lot of these young people have lost hope. They have violence in the streets and in the schools. And somehow or another we are going to have to get to them and create this feeling that there is hope out there for them because they have given up.

REVEREND WHITE: Absolutely. I think what happens, especially in urban America, we talk about the stereotypical mores and concepts of our society. We kind of push that and oppress people in that manner. Some of the finest young kids in America live in Camden City. I can tell you I know some of the kids. I'm originally from (indiscernible). You can probably tell from my accent. And when I think about Camden City and our children -- we have some fine children, and you're right, we just have to motivate them and bring the best out in them.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Assemblywoman Previte.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: You know what I like about you, Reverend White? Bless you, you practice what you preach.

REVEREND WHITE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Reverend White is on my Board of Trustees at the Camden County Youth Center, and for a number of years, he has been coming into the youth center talking to youngsters there on issues and substance abuse, and I appreciate what you contribute to the community, both at my youth center and in the city.

REVEREND WHITE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: I have a couple of questions for you. Have you discovered that youngsters involved in your youth programs at the church are less likely to be getting involved in crime?

REVEREND WHITE: Absolutely. I think it's because we tie them up so much. What we do is -- I have a structured way of doing that. A holiday is coming up this weekend. Friday afternoon we have a program in the church Friday. Saturday afternoon we have choir rehearsal. Saturday night they will be skating. What we are trying to do across the board, Assemblywoman, is to make sure that when there are gaps in services over the weekend and things of that nature, we tie these kids up so they can stay out of the way of crime so to speak.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: I just want comment that anchoring children to a house of faith has been proved nationwide as one of the strongest protective factors to keep a child from getting into trouble. I guess I have a question for you, Reverend. What can we do for you or for other faith-based organizations?

REVEREND WHITE: I think what you can do next year is probably put \$10 million in the budget for the faith-based communities. (laughter) That would help.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: I'm sure Assemblywoman Previte will sponsor that. (laughter)

REVEREND WHITE: No, I think what you need to do is really look at some of the faith-based community projects and see if those can be tailored across the community -- across the state. I think that it's not going to take a lot of money to do some of the things we need to do. We just need

start-up monies across the board to kind of keep our programs going. I think in a faith-based community, once we get a program going over a year or two, maybe three years, we can sustain it because we have volunteers, and volunteers will come out to be a part of this.

I'm very blessed to be in the Presbyterian church, which is a very connectual church. I can call the suburbs, Morristown Presbyterian Church, (undiscernible) Presbyterian Church, support me wholeheartedly -- cooperative partnership where people will come into the city, work with us across the board in anything we do. So I think that's important that we understand that. And I guess, in answer to your question, I just think you need to look at other ways of helping our youth outside of the traditional ways we have done it in the past.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: I guess I should tell Assemblyman Smith that the Boys and Girls Clubs are coming to Camden.

ASSEMBLYMAN SMITH: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: I'm a product of the Boys Club. Assemblyman Talarico.

ASSEMBLYMAN TALARICO: Reverend, thank you very much for coming before us. I really am touched by what you are talking about, actively participating and talking about things like responsibility and accountability. I get the sense that the lot programs and things like that give the kids a sense of pride in accomplishing something, and I think that that's really critical along the lines of Assemblyman Smith's talking about giving them hope.

The one thing you touched on-- I'm involved in the South Bronx Education Foundation, which sounds very similar to some of the things that

you talked about, after-school care in a very difficult environment. In getting the parents involved or a parent involved -- to many instances there is only a single parent -- has been a critical but yet challenging step. How do you recommend getting the parent or parents involved with a program like the ones you are talking about?

REVEREND WHITE: Part of the piece we have with the after-school tutorial program was one thing I mandated, that we have a certain percentage of parents be tutorial coordinators. I asked principals to sign off on that in support of it, and we got three schools involved, about eight staff people, we have three parents involved. I think you have to convince the parents to invest in the program. If the children spend a tremendous amount of time at the church, at the school, and they begin to talk about Reverend White and the things he is doing, periodically it happens that parents will come and be a part of that.

The second piece is through the tutorial program and through the substance abuse piece that we have in the church. We are doing parenting workshops -- active parenting -- where folks come out with life skills and things of that nature. The same thing we do at the prep program down in the county where we talk to parents about being intimately involved in the life of their children; realizing I can't do it by my myself, they have to be involved. That is a very slow process because sometimes in urban areas it complicates the problem, realizing that some of my children have the same intellectual levels as parents. However, once I get the children locked in the program, I realize that we need the parents' support to sustain the mission.

And what we do, also, is if we have trips -- going to Baltimore inner harbor or something of that nature, we invite the parents to come along

because it's an education for the children as well as the parents, and it gives them an opportunity to be exposed to certain things. So that's kind of where we are with that. And we particularly mandate sometimes that the parents be part of three to four meetings per year. If the children are going to be in the program, the parents have to come and get an orientation on what we are doing because safety is an issue. Why would you turn these children loose to me? I've had kids in my presence 10 to 12 hours. And I ask parents, "I know you like me a lot, but that's stretching it." So you need to know who I am, what we are doing, and be a part of the total mission.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you very much, Reverend.

REVEREND WHITE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: From Wings Consulting, Reverend Ed Ducree, President; David Meltz, Executive Vice President; Marilyn Williams, Executive Vice President.

Are you coming up together folks?

DAVID MELTZ: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Please do.

MR. MELTZ: Good morning everyone. I'm Dave Meltz, and thank you for the promotion. I'm actually not the president though. That's all right.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: No, I have you as Executive Vice President. Reverend Ed Ducree is the President.

MR. MELTZ: Oh, okay, I see.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: That's the way I read it I thought, but maybe not. I apologize if I misread it.

MR. MELTZ: That's okay. I was reveling in it for a moment.
(laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: You can switch seats if you would like. I don't know if the Reverend would agree.

REVEREND EDWARD DUCREE: He'd give up my seat today of any day.

MR. MELTZ: Thanks for the opportunity to come down here and talk with you about what I consider to be arguably the biggest problem that we face as a society. We are talking about adolescent violence. For me one of the priorities I come from-- My profession is I'm a mediator. I do both family mediating and mediating in the business community and in school systems. And I don't believe we have reinvented teenagers in this generation, but we have reinvented the world.

Information and misinformation flies around at the speed of light literally. Our kids, back in the '70s we were concerned about how much violence they were subjected to. That has grown exponentially. One of the realities we have to deal with is that negativity is extremely powerful. It takes quite a long time to build a house, it can take seconds to destroy it.

I think when we are going to be dealing with teens, one of the other things we have to do is take a good long look in the mirror before we start prescribing what's right for them and start taking a look at who are we and how do we conduct ourselves, taking them into the process but not making them the exclusive object of our vision.

As I look around, I have seen examples in government, examples in the media, monumental examples in sports, on television of unbridled violence. Going down to very little things like nitpicking, name calling, and

abusive behavior to-- I think, by the time a kid is 16, he has seen a couple hundred thousand acts of violence on television. Kids do learn by modeling. The average kid is watching six hours of television a day. We can't legislate that out of existence. And when they are not on TV, the Internet has taken over or some other video game is taken over.

One of the things that just came up is Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys Clubs, Girls Clubs gets them out of that vacuum, gets them to start looking at the possibility of building their lives and building themselves.

We have to take a long look at our system of justice. Are we really helping ourselves in the way we are conducting it? Our legal process is adversarial in nature. By its nature it's a contest, it's deal making, it's negotiating.

On the teams that I'm familiar with, parole has become pretty much a meaningless standard. It's no great shame, it's no great shock, it's no big problem, it's barely an inconvenience. One thing I was-- I am going to mention to the committee (*sic*) that there was an unfortunate incident at the high school. I come from very rural Warren County, and we are not supposed to have problems up there, but we do occasionally. Actually, we have more than-- We have less people -- less people, less problems. It was an incident which I think is somewhat indicative of some of the violence that is going on today, and thankfully it didn't result in overt violence. There were some racial incidents in the school which ultimately culminated one child coming to school in black face with a noose around his neck on the day before Halloween.

Most unfortunate, terrible. You know you talk about pervocative acts, you talk about a terrible mistake in judgment -- all of these things come

to mind. And yet when you look at the history of it, it was cumulative. It was one act begetting another act and accelerating and expanding.

Part of what we have to do, I believe, is-- I look at it and say I agree with what has gone on so far today. We have to put the emphasis on prevention. To me that is so much less expensive than trying to restore things if prevented from happening in the first place. I believe we do have to start embracing the notion of teaching people how to be better parents. In a typical household where you have aggressive behavior demonstrated frequently, there is long periods of time between the aggressive incidents, and so we really have to take a look at are we doing a good job as teaching ourselves to be parents.

I think we have to take a look at the school administrations. Schools are walking a tightrope now. Every decision has the implications of massive legal liability. They are of grave concern. I think we have to address that. I think we have to take a look at our dispute resolution systems. Do we do it quickly? Do we do it effectively? Do we have these constant repeat offenders coming back into the circuit? It occurs to me that we do.

Finally, as a society, I think we have forgotten how to do certain very basic human things. I think having that talk with the wise old uncle is something that's incredibly valuable. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, it's not just something from the good old days. It's something that help arouse consciousness and awareness. I think programs like this are of immense value in the community. I think we have to learn how to cry without feeling like we are neurotic. I think we have to learn how to touch without feeling that we are invading other people's space, and we have to also learn not to invade other people's space.

I think we have to start behaving with a great deal more wisdom than we have in the past. And as I said at the start, I think we have to do more looking in the mirror than we do looking out.

REVEREND DUCREE: I will defer to Marilyn, and then I will be last.

MARILYN WILLIAMS: Is this mike on?

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: If the light is illuminated, ma'am, it's on.

MS. WILLIAMS: Red light or the-- Oh, okay.

My name is Marilyn Williams. I'm here to ask for legislative support in a restorative justice in the development of community dispute resolution programs, particularly programs that are going to be addressing adolescents and children.

In 1989, in New Zealand, the New Zealand government passed the Families and Children's Act. And the purpose of that Act was -- or the basic premise of that Act was, if any family or child or youth was to be involved in the justice system that they have the right to be involved in the decision-making process. And out of that came family group conferencing and community group conferencing. And so what happened was the New Zealand government passed this law saying all youth, if they committed a crime, in addition to dealing with the judicial system, they had to go through a community or family group conferencing process.

So in this process, and it's what we would define as a restorative justice process, the youth has to stand -- not only would they have to stand before the legal system, but they also have to stand before their family, their mothers, their fathers, their grandparents, their aunts, their uncles -- any

significant people in their family or community -- and acknowledge to the person that they have hurt or harmed, and then the family or the community will come together and determine what needs to be done in order to rectify that harm that child or youth has committed.

As a result of instituting that process in New Zealand, they greatly reduced the number of children that ended up in detention. One of the reasons why -- one of the really impetuous reasons for that movement was that they were really concerned about children getting involved or being placed in detention. Because what they had found was the earlier a child goes into detention, the more likely it is that they are going to be in the system -- in the jail system as an adult.

And as a result of them using this process, and it is well researched now, they greatly reduced the number of children that ended up in the detention system. And they also greatly reduced the number of children and youth who would be repeat offenders and go back into the system. And so what basically that process is doing is allowing the community to be a part of a process that helps to take care of the ills within the community. And it is also allowing the person to be reintegrated back into the community, and that's something else that's really important.

We are depending on jails and detention centers to take care of our problems, and we are creating more problems than we are taking care of. We're creating generations of children who have parents who have been in prison now, and those children are much more likely to go to jail than children whose parents have not been involved in that process. And so we are making the problem bigger than smaller. We are not solving it. I think we are adding to the problem. So I would ask that the Legislature support the development

of community dispute resolution programs. This is one of the few states that does not have community dispute resolution programs. I would also ask that you provide legislative support for the restorative justice system.

REVERED DUCREE: My name is Edward Ducree, and I function as President of the Wings Consultant Group. My partners here, what they have done is essentially laid out for us some of the theoretical and the philosophical undergirding that we need to understand some of the problem.

In a very real sense we do a little but more than that. We have formed a Kids with Wings-- I'm talking about the here and now and what we are doing every day. Existentially there are things going on, and we have to make quick decisions about what we do with a given community. And one of the things that we've done with communities that are hurting -- in St. Louis, in Indianapolis, and we are now getting that developed here in Trenton, hopefully in Camden -- is a Kids with Wings Program, which is an after-school program that has prevention as the primary impetus as the rationale for making a difference with children and their families.

And what we've done is we've set out basically X amount of values, X amount of principles, and what we do is we say that if Johnny and Sally can master these two or three-- We time those principles -- we have a time when that is part of the curriculum. And as soon as Johnny or Sally master these kinds of principles, we have a celebration service, and we invite the parents to be involved in that, so it's measurable and people can see the progress being made. There are no report cards, and we believe that everyone basically is capable of doing whatever their own potential or their own given talents allow them to do. So basically there is no "I'm smarter than you" or "You are better than Sam," or whatever that is, but a child's progress is measured by what he

or she can master and depending upon the support that he or she gets from the family. So that's one part of what we do.

My background is working professionally for a number of years with fighting street gangs in New York City. And that was an eye-opener in terms of my working as a professional street gang worker. But that didn't really come to me as anything new in terms of what was going on in the streets because I grew up in Bedford-Stuyvesant Brooklyn and was a member of one of the gangs because it seemed to me that was the logical thing to do until my mother came in one day when the guys were meeting in our back room and looked at the crowd in the room and simply said, "Edward, dear, are these your friends?" And I said, "Yes, mother." She said, "Well, from now on you call me Alice. You don't even have to call me mother anymore," and that's all she needed to do.

With that and the faith-based institution -- and that wasn't a nomenclature then, but it was the church, as well as some persons from the community, who had moved out of the community, who came back, and who told me you can be better than I am and you can be brighter and you can be more successful. Those are the kinds of role models that got me out of the ghetto. Those are old-fashioned principles, but they still work.

There is another part to this though. I think at the same time that we are talking about what is going on with our young people and problems with young adults and children and delinquency and violence, we have to think about the systemic, we have to think about our society, we have to think about other forms of violence. And I honestly want to make certain -- at least I want it articulated here that nothing is more violent than poverty. Nothing is more violent than an infrastructure where people have to go miles and miles to get

to a decent supermarket. Nothing is more violent than what we saw as children, rat-infested neighborhoods and apartments in spite the fact that the people are clean; but their houses are so bad and so old and the structure is so dilapidated. In spite of the cleaning and the washing, there are still the holes where the rats come in, and so on. I remember that as a child and that hasn't changed.

And I'm saying that that's a kind of violence that our young people are going through now, and I think that what we need to do is be careful that we are not blaming it on our young people to the point that now we have a disproportionate number of African-Americans filling our prisons. And I want to submit to you, ladies and gentlemen, that is no accident. And it's not because African-Americans are more immoral than anybody else or they are more crime prone. There is a system in place -- and after I say this you might not want to ever get in touch with me again -- but there is a system in place-- It's not accidental that African-Americans now make up the basic jail population in a disproportionate way. I mean everything about the demographics of our country defies that kind of reality.

So I am suggesting to you, without saying all the rest of the things because you are intelligent people, that needs to stop. That's a form of violence. And as the prison industry gets to be a bigger and bigger one, as AT&T and all these other companies who make money off prisons and they have now the free labor of prisoners who happen to be Hispanic or African-American more than anyone else -- I think the Legislature needs to look at that -- so that you have two forms of violence going on simultaneously.

And I think what you see happening with our youths and the difficulties that they are getting at -- I think it's a response, a reaction to an

incredible system, a way of life. I found myself in Bedford-Stuyvesant just dealing with stuff coming at us, crazy stuff, all kinds of stuff. And I used to ask my mother, "Why is it that we have so much pain?" My mother said, "Son, one day you will understand." That same pain goes on. Some of us experience that pain daily. So it ought not be any wonder -- it ought not be any wonder why some of our children just resort to striking out at each other.

Someone in a laboratory had an experience that's analogous to Pavlov's dog and salvia experiment, and that was to just introduce them to a cage -- some rats that always got along well together, but some guy said, "What would happen if we would introduce some electrical charges into that cage?" And they put these rats that always got along together -- they were family. Somebody introduced electrical charges, and then all of a sudden the rats began to turn on each other and devour each other.

So when we talk about black-on-black crime, it's because of the charges, because of all the crazy stuff that is going on. Clean up the infrastructure. I don't think kids cleaning lots-- I think that's fine. I think we need something much larger than that, and I think the Legislature and persons who are the entrepreneurs, persons who are the capitalists, persons who have the 10 percent -- who have 90 percent of the wealth -- they are the ones who can make the difference because they are the landlords.

So that's one of the things that we try to do simultaneously. When we work with parents, we try to help them to understand the stuff that is going on: "No, Mr. Smith, it's not just you. There are some other things about which you have no control." And I'm sure what I've said is not very popular, but that's the reality. And I think we have to work collaboratively. There are some things I can do as a minister, as a teacher, and as a community

organizer, and as we do conflict resolution and violence prevention, we know that there is some violence that we can't prevent, that persons like you all sitting can help us to prevent. We do those things simultaneously and we can have a better world.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you, Reverend.

Any questions of the Reverend or this panel?

Assemblywoman Previte.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Ms. Williams.

MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Is there anywhere in our state that there is a demonstration program of the type of -- you called it conflict resolution, where someone stands in front of the community, their family that they have done harm to. Is that modeled anywhere in our state?

MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Could you tell us where that is?

MS. WILLIAMS: The Burlington County Superior Court Complementary Dispute Resolution Programs has been doing model conflict resolution with communities and families. Through their dispute resolution program, they have done a number that involve community disputes, some of them involve racial disputes. There have been some cases involving criminal charges against children where that has been done.

Diane Tally (phonetic spelling), who runs the Comprehensive Dispute Resolution Program in the Burlington County Superior Court, has been doing this for about a year and a half now.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: A question for Reverend Ducree.

REVEREND DUCREE: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Who funds the Wings -- Kids with Wings?

REVEREND DUCREE: Marilyn is laughing because we do the funding. That is, when I finish buying the bread and the milk and the meat, whatever we have left -- we put our own funds. We haven't received one dime for what we are doing.

As the program exists now in Indianapolis -- the American Baptist is a denomination, thank God they fund that. But right now we haven't received one dime. The truth of the matter is we haven't -- we are just not putting together the proposals to seek the funding. So that's an honest answer to where we are right now.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Well, can I suggest something to you. I would welcome having you go to every youth service commission in the state, and there is one in every county. I happen to have been a founding member of the Youth Service Commission in Camden County, and I have never heard of your program.

REVEREND DUCREE: Wonderful.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: It sounds like the kind of thing that every county youth services commission would like to know about, and they are constantly giving out grants--

REVEREND DUCREE: Fantastic.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: --to just the type of thing that you are describing. So I would urge you to seek out-- In fact, you may get in touch with me--

REVEREND DUCREE: Wonderful.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: --and I can arrange to see that you get a list of the people who are in charge of the youth service commissions throughout the state. We welcome that kind of thing. We need to hear about both the Kids with Wings and more about -- although we have heard some about the conflict resolution, but we need to hear more of that in our youth service commissions so that they can hear about the fledgling efforts and maybe support them with money. At least pass the word about them.

REVEREND DUCREE: Wonderful.

May I share something?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Yes.

REVEREND DUCREE: The other thing that has happened, we received a phone call -- I won't name the school district, but we just completed the workshop. The crisis -- and this may interest some of the members of your panel. The crisis was that some 29 African-American seniors had graduated last year -- May or June, whenever the graduation time is set -- and after some-- Twenty-eight, twenty-nine had graduated and all were accepted -- some were given scholarships -- they were accepted at various colleges around this country. And then a parent in a packed room got up a few weeks ago and said, "You know what, something is wrong. Out of all the 29 African-American males that graduated only 4 showed up on college campuses." So they asked us to come in and do the workshop to deal with some of the root causes, and

so on. That's indicative of something that I think all of us will need some help on and all of us must address.

So you see that's the other side of it. I won't try to talk about what some of those causes are, but we all need to be aware of that. That's what is going on.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Any other questions? (no response)

Thank you very much.

REVEREND DUCREE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Richard Pompelio, Executive Director of New Jersey Crime Victims' Law Center.

RICHARD POMPELIO, ESQ.: Good morning.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Good morning.

MR. POMPELIO: When we talk about such things as pain, as we are today, I can think of no greater pain than having to survive as a parent of a murdered child and having to go through each day surviving that violence. Or the young woman having to go through the rest of her life having been the victim of a violent sexual assault. Or when I sit with a 50-year-old woman who was sexually abused as a child by her father or her uncle and have her look at me and say, "My childhood was robbed from me, and now my adulthood is also being taken."

I speak from a different perspective today, perhaps, because I speak from the perspective of the victim of the crime, not the perpetrator, not the potential perpetrator, but the innocent victim. I should tell you a bit about who I am, I guess. I'm an attorney. I've been an attorney for over 25 years. I founded the New Jersey Crime Victims' Law Center in 1992. I am pleased

to say -- I should say I'm proud to say, not necessarily pleased -- that we are the only pro bono victims' law advocacy center in the country. And we have been able to survive these past six years, and I'm very proud of the fact that we have been able to do it because we do provide legal advocacy to all victims of crime in a manner that it's not provided anywhere else in the country.

Now, the Victims' Law Center is open to everyone, no one is charged. Most of the work we receive and we get is referrals from Prosecutor's Offices these days where a victim is being horribly treated and there is just no place for the victim in the justice proceedings. And this discussion is about the Juvenile Justice System and fortunately, or unfortunately, that's what we have. This is all about the system that deals with kids who get in trouble. And I imagine several of you are attorneys, and if you look back to your law school career--

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Just for the record, none I think.

MR. POMPELIO: None of you are.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Well, not practicing.

MR. POMPELIO: I don't think I've ever been in a room with--

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: He has a law degree, but he doesn't practice. (indicating)

MR. POMPELIO: --several legislators and at least one was an attorney.

And one of the things that is ingrained in you-- I always say law school is like a process of osmosis: you really don't understand it until you go through it. And one of the things that you come out of it with is this incredible respect and love for the law and the absolute beauty and strength of

the Constitution, and you come out of it wanting to fight for justice and you will do it in the justice system.

The only problem is, when you get out, you have only had one perspective, and that is the Fifth Amendment is all about protecting those wonderful people like Earnesto Miranda or Es Cabita (phonetic spelling), and you start thinking they are heroes, but they are not the heroes, and it takes lawyers a long time and some of them never really understand they are not the heroes. The heroes were people like Earl Warren and William O. Douglas who decided those cases back in the '50s, who took the Constitution and elevated it to the level where it ought to be seen, observed, understood, and appreciated.

I say this only because that is the perspective of too many lawyers. In this state, I think we are up to 65,000 lawyers, and how many of them have the perspective of the justice system, be it the Juvenile Justice System or the adult criminal justice system where the victim is even a part of it? Take my word for it, very, very, few because I'm immersed in it. This is what I do. And how many judges have that same perspective?

I will tell you this, about four years ago, just about to this day, I was sitting in the Judicial College giving a course on victims' rights. I haven't taught it since, so maybe the judges know everything there is to know about victims' rights by now, but the problem is you have that perspective -- we have that perspective in our Juvenile Justice System.

I can give examples of so many. One comes to mind. A few years ago I was asked to represent this woman whose daughter was murdered by a 17-year-old in Essex County, and the Prosecutor's Office asked me to represent her because the judge in the case refused to allow her and her son into the courtroom. And we had filed a motion to appear on her behalf.

I recall going down there, and the scene is one I'll probably never forget. Because in the hallways in the Essex County Courthouse it was quite dark. You had a row along the wall and a row along the other wall of kids charged with some kind of juvenile offense. And you had one public defender up at the other end yelling out their names. I couldn't believe it. This is supposed to be somewhat confidential. These kids are supposed to be entitled to some kind of protection, yet their names are being called in public.

And they allowed me in the courtroom because I was a lawyer, not my client. And as I sat there waiting for our case to be called, there was a young man called up, and I think he was 16 years old, a tall kid, and the judge said to him, "Let's see, you're charged with distribution of cocaine, you're charged with resisting arrest, you're charged with assault and battery. Now this is the seventh time you have been here before me, and I'm telling you this is your last chance," and the kid is laughing at him. I mean he is just laughing as if to say, ha, ha, you said this to me last time. And the public defender is shaking his head, and the assistant prosecutor is shaking her head. It was an absolute bizarre scene, but I said to myself this probably happens every single day here. This is totally unreal, but it is real. It's what happens.

And then, when our case was called, I had to absolutely fight so that that woman sitting in the back row very quietly, the mother of the murder victim, would be allowed to continue -- she wasn't there yet -- but she would be allowed to come in and sit quietly in the back row to observe these proceedings. And that same judge who allowed the juvenile offender to laugh at him looked at me and said, "No, because this woman is entitled to the protections of confidentiality." So we did what we've done many times since. We went to the Appellate Division and got him reversed, and the next day

mom was sitting in court. One of the common things I've discovered is, when you get a lower court judge reversed in cases like this, they are not all that pleased with having to permit the victim's family to sit in the proceedings thereafter, so they better be real quiet or they are going to kick them out.

I tell you all this because this is the justice system and this is the perspective too many lawyers and too many judges have, not through any fault of their own because it's the way it's been ingrained in them. This is the system in which they look upon as the system that they work in.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Mr. Pompelio, let me stop you for a second.

MR. POMPELIO: Yes, sir

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: I think your testimony is in the vein of introducing the victims' rights issue and the adjudication of adolescent violence. I think that's what your testimony is. I would like you to give to the committee--

MR. POMPELIO: I'm getting too far, I'm sorry.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: I'd like you to give to the committee what your suggestions are or what your challenges are to the committee with respect to dealing with the adolescent violence issue, and if it's the inclusion of victims in that adjudication -- if that's your suggestion -- I would like you to get to the committee.

MR. POMPELIO: All right. I have a habit of not trying to make a point until I've given some background so you can understand it. I think if the justice system had more of that, then maybe these quick fixes they try to propose would work. In any event, then I will give you a very quick list.

1. One of the biggest problems in the justice system is the confidentiality issue. It is being misused, victims are being mistreated. It actually seldom protects the perpetrator, and it causes great harm to the victim. One of the things that I would hope you would look at is the accessibility of the victim to the juvenile justice proceedings and the juvenile justice records and information. If a victim of a crime is harmed or there is a murder, it is very, very difficult to get access to the documentation because of the issue of confidentiality. And then the statute does not address it in an appropriate fashion.

The second factor I would say is that at the Victims' Law Center we proposed to some juvenile court judges that the kids be allowed to do community service with us, just a few because we don't have a whole lot of time, so that they can get the perspective of the victim. And this has happened up in Sussex County on a couple of occasions with juveniles, and I think it has worked quite well. So one of the things I would suggest to you is perhaps, in this issue of community service, that it at least be considered to be a bit more meaningful as opposed to having them scrub the floors in a hospital. Maybe they can get a realistic perspective of what it's like to be a victim.

The third item has already been brought up, and that's the issue of parental responsibility. I don't need to tell any of you anything about that. There are so many things that can be done. There are so many things that have been proposed in this state, some accepted. I think we are all kidding ourselves if we don't bring the entire family into the juvenile problem.

Finally, the fourth I would say recommendation is again supportive of what was previously said, and that's the issue of restorative justice. I sit on the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission, the Restorative Justice Project.

If you would like to read something about it you might want to check our Website. That's [www.nj_vlc](http://www.nj_vlc.com) -- like New Jersey Victims' Law Center -- .com. And what we've put on there is we had several articles from people who are experts in the area of restorative justice. You might find it very interesting.

I'm sorry if I kind of went off on a tangent, except I think it's important that when you talk about justice and the justice system that you kind of have a broad-based picture of it and you also have a perspective of the people who are actually working in it and who administer it.

Other than that I have no other recommendations per se.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you very much, Mr. Pompelio.

Any questions of the committee? (no response)

Thank you.

MR. POMPELIO: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: From Covenant House, Kevin Ryan and Jackie Steadman.

KEVIN RYAN, ESQ.: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Assembly. My name is Kevin Ryan, and I'm the General Counsel to Covenant House. I'm the Director of its Youth Advocacy Center, and I am joined today by my associate, Jackie Steadman.

As you may know, Covenant House is the largest private system of shelters and care for homeless children in the United States. We are operating in 18 American cities and in six countries in North and Central America. Our 200,000 donors in New Jersey enable us to operate shelters and service programs for kids of the street in Newark and in Atlantic City.

Today we want to talk a little bit about the connection between gang violence and youth violence and homelessness and to talk a little bit about our work and to make a couple of recommendations which we think might improve our ability to touch kids in crisis.

On Saturday, as you all probably know, the United States Department of Justice released one of the most comprehensive studies of gang violence to date. The report, which was sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the National Institute of Justice, examines criminal behavior of gang members and of those susceptible to gang membership in Denver and Colorado and in Broward County, Florida, and those communities were selected largely based on their merging gang problem.

The researchers conclusively reported that the single best predictor of gang kids avoiding or getting out of gangs is finding legitimate employment. At Covenant House, we've understood for 26 years that life on the streets is a dead end for kids. Spending time on the streets undoubtedly contributes to aggressive antisocial and deviant behavior. It encourages young people to become violent. Many young people in our programs-- Many young people on the streets join gangs in order to survive, in order to make a go of life on the streets.

Michael Kipkey (phonetic spelling) and his colleagues demonstrated in a 1997 article, which we can provide for you, that there is a powerful correlation between homelessness and youth violence. Twenty-five percent of homeless youth who responded to the author's survey reported that they had attacked someone with a knife; 22 percent of those kids had done so since living on the street. The overwhelming majority, and similarly all 22 percent of the young people who he had surveyed, indicated that they had shot

at someone. The overwhelming majority of those kids had only done so since they had begun to live on the streets.

The numbers of children on the streets who succumb to violence is even more staggering. Covenant House New Jersey has endeavored to combat gang violence by undertaking to reach out to homeless and runaway young people in New Jersey and to offer them shelter and services, including job skill development and employment opportunities. And those programs work. Kids' lives are turned around.

Last year we served over 500 young people between the ages of 14 and 20 in Atlantic City and in Newark. Many clients reattached themselves to social support structures while they were in our programs. They earned high school diplomas, they got jobs, they moved into apartments, and they began a nondependent/independent living program. They worked and they saved and they became responsible members of the community. That reattachment is key.

J A C Q U E L Y N S T E A D M A N, ESQ.: The need is intense, however, and the resources are scarce. Based on FBI data, the Garden State Coalition for Youth and Family Concerns estimates that there are 13,000 homeless and runaway children in New Jersey. There are, however, only 300 shelter beds in the entire state. In comparison, there are more beds for homeless kids in a one-block area of Times Square in New York City than there are in the entire State of New Jersey.

Beyond the shortage of available beds, a gap in State law forces many homeless and runaway young people to continue to live on the streets. Unlike many other states, New Jersey does not allow homeless and runaway

young people to seek shelter on their own without first obtaining the consent of a parent, guardian, or judge.

For 25 years the Federal government, under the auspices of its Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, has funded shelter services and street outreach services for homeless kids throughout the country expecting programs to provide short-term crisis intervention for walk-in clients. In New Jersey, those services are often denied to children because State law does not permit young people to access crisis shelters on their own.

Agencies like Covenant House, which are privately run and expect no subsidy from the State, are unable to house children in crisis because State law makes no provision for the type of intervention which is critical to saving kids and tuning their lives around. We urge you to change existing law to permit young people to access sheltered services on their own for a limited period of time.

Our second recommendation to the Task Force is that you will expand the number of beds for homeless and runaway young people and fund street outreach programs to reach out into our communities and bring at risk kids into care. The Federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act has for years sanctioned the work of programs like ours to fan out into train tunnels, abandoned buildings, under boardwalks, and on street corners to establish a connection to kids in crisis.

Unlike New Jersey, most states have a companion program of outreach. There is simply no more effective way to disrupt the epidemic of gang violence than to offer kids on the street a safe alternative. In Atlantic City our staff rides 10-speed bikes along the boardwalk to reach out to kids on the margins. In Newark our team rides an outreach van through the city's

most dangerous neighborhoods to offer food, clothing, and shelter to kids at night.

These programs provide a vital connection between caregivers and at-risk young people who are confronting a vital crossroads, either submerged into the violence of the gang or receive a second chance in society. We should be about making those second chances a reality.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you very much.

Any questions from the committee?

Assemblywoman Previte.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: How many children are served in the Newark and Atlantic City programs annually in Covenant House?

MR. RYAN: We serve approximately 500 young people in those programs.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Do you receive any State funding?

MR. RYAN: We receive no State funding, no.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Do the youngsters that get there in any way get under the umbrella of DYFS?

MR. RYAN: Some young people do. Some young people stay with us while a case is being evaluated, Assemblywoman. And if DYFS makes a finding that the young person should be in care, then the young person can be received into care. There are a lot of informal barriers to help a young person, especially an older adolescent, access care in DYFS. That said, it's still a possibility that some of these kids can receive shelter care through the Division.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: So would a youngster be precluded from having DYFS supervision if they are under your umbrella?

MR. RYAN: No, not at all. In fact, as I think you may be aware, over the course of the last year, 40 groups from across the state have come together, some from State government, many private associations, the Association for Children of New Jersey, like New Jersey Catholic Conference, Covenant House, State Police, local law enforcement, and have begun to think about the ways in which the system alienates or doesn't serve children well. And that coalition, which has been called the Runaway and Homeless Youth Task Force, has drafted legislation which would effectively allow children to obtain for a short period of time crisis care, and I mean short. Once there is an effective intervention and the young person is taken off of the streets and is brought into safe haven, then the legislation called for a collaborative process working with the Division, or working with the Family Crisis Intervention Unit, to decide on a more permanent arrangement for the young people.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Mr. Chairman, I think it would be worthwhile for the committee to know the detention association is right now beginning to collaborate with the Garden State Coalition for Children and Families to do a snapshot of some sense of how many children in detention in our county facilities are actually homeless children that absolutely have no place to go.

I was not aware until you said it right now, and I have worked in this business for 25 years, that a youngster alone cannot access a shelter unless it is a privately operated shelter such as yours. In other words--

MR. RYAN: No, they really can't even access shelter care at our programs.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: So they can't even go into Covenant House. A child alone cannot walk to your place and say, "I'm a runaway, and I'd like to stay here tonight or this week."

MR. RYAN: Right. And so shelter providers are left with this choice. We either turn the child into the street or we house the child impermissibly. And without making any concessions before this committee--

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Please don't. God bless you, but please don't.

MR. RYAN: There are a lot of programs that observed the rule in the breach. (*sic*)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: But is that also true of the runaway crash pads that the Federal government funded 25 years ago?

MR. RYAN: This is a fascinating question that raises a complicated issue of federalism. The Federal government does in fact fund basic centers in New Jersey to serve as crisis intervention points for kids on the street. New Jersey law does not, in a corresponding fashion, authorize young people, children, to walk in and receive those services. So while the Federal government authorizes the service provider to provide the service, New Jersey law does not, in a corresponding fashion, authorize the young person to access that service.

And as we have taken our message throughout the state -- we have met with the family court judges and we've met with the Juvenile Justice Commission and we've met with folks in the Governor's Office. I think folks are startled that this gap exists, that young people really cannot on their own access care and services.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: I know the committee is startled.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I want to raise an issue that I think that the committee needs to hear. We came narrowly in the last three months of getting Federal legislation that would allow the children, who these experts are talking to us about today, children who are runaways and probably because of abuse and difficulties in their homes, being thrown into adult jails. We came within an inch of our lives of having the Federal government pass legislation that would allow that nationwide.

And I am told, bless your hearts, that it was Covenant House almost singlehandedly getting children who had run away to write little letters and say, "Please don't put me into jail lockups." That finally turned the opinions of at least one Senator from the State of New Jersey to vote against that legislation. I can't emphasize how important it is to be on the front line of some of these issues. Because I tell you, the children you are talking about, if we don't get them turned around and diverted, they are going to come into the lockups very quickly and be costing us something in the range of \$200 plus per day to serve them in a dead-end detention center and, of course, the State correctional facilities.

MR. RYAN: Thank you for raising that issue, Assemblywoman. And I appreciate the credit that you have given to Covenant House; although, there were many advocates involved in that process. But I can tell you that on the Federal level it was really the leadership of -- bipartisan fashion -- Senator Santorum from Pennsylvania and Senator Leahy from Vermont who made a real strong stand against putting our kids into secured detention.

But I will tell you this that when we were negotiating with the staff of the Judiciary Committee and we said to them, "There are basic centers in every state which are authorized to care for kids," the response was, "But in your own state the law does not allow those kids to access that service." "Yes," I said, "that's right, it doesn't, but we are working on that." And I would be very pleased to present members of this Task Force with a copy of the draft legislation which these 40 groups have developed over the past year to address this very specific issue.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Mr. Ryan, I will repeat what I said moments ago. You certainly startled the committee. I don't know if I can speak for everyone, but as Chair I am startled to hear this. And you may or may not have seen me lean over to our committee staff and ask for -- not this particular draft because I am not familiar with it -- but a draft piece of legislation be brought up for consideration. It may or may not be brought up for consideration by this committee, but it's certainly something that I'm interested in looking into in light of your testimony. So you see the process works.

Vice Chairman, Assemblyman Smith.

ASSEMBLYMAN SMITH: Don't you get a lot of referrals from the law enforcement authorities, the police, and so on, especially around the Newark area?

MR. RYAN: We do get some, Mr. Vice Chairman, and that's why we thought it was important to invite the State Police and local law enforcement to the Task Force because they are a big part of the equation. Frankly, a lot of what they have taught me is that they are overburdened, that law enforcement has a lot of responsibilities to a community, and that it is in

some communities unreasonable to expect that they are also going to go into the Amtrak tunnels and under the boardwalk and into the vacant tenements and say to a kid, "You know what, there is a shelter two blocks away. Don't hang out here."

One of the committee members earlier asked, what is the key? This isn't brain science. The key is relationship. The key is relationship. I can't tell you how many times our staff go out on their 10-speed bikes or on the van and the kids don't come. The kids don't come the first time. The kids don't come the second time. But when that 10-speed bike or that van is out in the community every night reliably with a blanket and a sandwich and a story or hug or referral, a relationship develops and then kids come in. Kids make the decision, "You know what this is a dead end, I'm sick of this, and I'm going to make the decision to receive sheltered services and care."

And it's that type of street outreach program which the Federal government has for 25 years funded in which most states fund some companion piece. I realize the budget is a difficult process, and I'm not advocating at the moment that New Jersey fund that at some specific level. But I am saying it's something to think about, whether there should be a State-initiated companion outreach piece to send staff out into the communities to get these kids into care and into shelter-- Our programs teach us that it works.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: And other questions from the committee?

Assemblyman Thompson.

ASSEMBLYMAN THOMPSON: Could you give me a rough age and sex distribution of the children that you have serviced.

MR. RYAN: Most of the children are between the ages of 14 and 20, but I will say even more narrowly we are seeing kids who are much older, adolescents and 16- and 17-year-olds. In terms of a gender breakdown, in one program we have many more females and in one program we have many more males. So I'm not certain what that represents.

Nationally, runaways and homeless kids are disproportionately female and disproportionately lured into survival sex and exploited sex. I spent the first five years of my time at Covenant House working on our Times Square project, and there were lots of kids who were being pimped within blocks of the shelter.

ASSEMBLYMAN THOMPSON: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Any other questions? (no response)

Thank you very much for your testimony.

MR. RYAN: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: We'll next hear from Steve Berry, Rick Watson, and Doug Reichert, Alternatives to Detention Program.

DOUG REICHERT: Good morning.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Good morning.

MR. REICHERT: Mr. Chair, members of the Assembly: My name is Doug Reichert, and this is Steve Berry and Rick Watson. We are all adolescent counselors, and we work for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Metuchen. Catholic Charities is a nonprofit organization, and our agency covers four counties, Warren County, Hunterdon, Middlesex, and Somerset.

We are here to make a very focused presentation about one program we run in Warren County called Alternatives to Detention. We call

it ADP. That has made a significant impact on juveniles who are already involved in the Juvenile Justice System. It's a Program that has been around two years, and we worked with 56 children who we have taken out of the detention center in Warren County.

The Catholic Charities Alternatives to Detention Program, otherwise known as ADP, exists to the juveniles from detention and prevent continued delinquency in Warren County. Catholic Charities jointly provides this Program with the Warren County Juvenile Probation Department. ADP has served 56 juvenile offenders since it began approximately two years ago. Our quarterly statistics indicate that 79 percent of the juveniles accepted into this Program have had no reoccurrence of delinquency while involved in services.

We maintain a caseload of 12 youngsters at this time. So we work with 12 kids and families at any one time. The only children that come into our Program are kids where the only other alternative to them is detention. Also, one guardian or one parent must be willing to work with us.

Juveniles are referred by the Warren County Family Division and assessed by the ADP probation counselor, Mr. Watson, for Program appropriateness and recommendations. So when we get a call from the Family Division, we go up to the jail, we meet with the youngster, we meet with the family, we assess whether they will be safe and will work within our structure to come out of the jail. At that point, if we believe that, we make a recommendation to the family court, and the judge will either keep the kid in probation or order them back out of jail into our Program.

Of the 56 youth that we have worked with for the last two years 45 percent of them had charges related to violence, including assault, weapons

charges, and robbery. Additionally, 100 percent of the juveniles had issues involving family conflict. Eighty-eight percent of these kids had multiple charges on their juvenile record. Sixty-one percent had no employment history. Sixty-one percent had issues of behavioral and academic difficulties in school. Forty-three percent were classified with a learning problem. And at least twenty percent of the kids -- their charges had to do with drugs and alcohol. What we have experienced is that adolescent violence and delinquency is a comprehensive problem involving a comprehensive solution. We assess all the juveniles in terms their needs, their strengths, and their weaknesses. And they are all important -- they are all equally important in knowing what to do with the individual youngster. The kids involved in the Program are linked to providers in their own community that address their issues. Typically, violent offenders in the families are linked with family counseling, substance abuse counseling, anger management groups, and employment.

The Program probation counselor monitors the progress of all the juveniles' therapies, school performance, behavior at home, employment, and compliance with our rules and structure. The juveniles and the families are given positive feedback and new expectations based on their progress in the Program. And typically kids stay with us from six to twelve months.

The ADP probation counselor assumes the role of primary case manager for the juveniles and their families with a goal to assess their progress and attempt to unify all the systems that are working with the youngster and their family. And many of them are involved with many systems, agencies, DYFS, school systems, lawyers, and so forth.

The juveniles are maintained in their home and are provided with 24-hour support and emergency response. Program staff visit the juveniles three times a week in their homes, schools, or places of employment. This provides the juveniles and their families experience and guidance in working on resolving issues as they arise. Juveniles are held accountable for their behaviors. They have to sign a Program contract that clearly identifies their and our expectations while in the Program.

Program termination and detention, a stabilization period in detention, court sanctions, the extension of our Program, increased supervision, and a loss of weekend passes are all possible consequences for noncompliance with our structure. The structure is decreased or increased as juveniles demonstrate stability or lack of it in the community. All juveniles are hooked up to an electronic monitor for at least the first six weeks in the Program. They are required to be in their homes when not in school or working or attending another approved appointment. Juveniles that do well and follow their contract move into phase two of the Program where we take off the electronic bracelet and we still monitor them.

Juveniles can be court-ordered back into phase one of the Program if they fall short of expectations. All the kids we give aftercare, which is a point where we see them once a week instead of three times a week. And any change we make with these kids has to go back before the family court judge. All program juveniles are required to provide 20 hours of community service, and we work with Probation to find sites and monitor their progress.

We faced several challenges during the course of the last three years in attempting to meet the needs of the juveniles involved with our Program. There is a little gap in services for crisis counseling and in-home

counseling for these kids and families that typically experience a lot of bumps in the road and problems even while they are making progress and following goals and structure, and they have a hardest time in evenings and on weekends. We provide backup, but there is very little else for them.

Originally, our Program had an in-home counselor devoted to three families in the greatest need, and they spent most of their time working with these families. However, funding was not sufficient to maintain this position past the first year. Finding adequate funding to meet the needs has also been a challenge. Our original program included a day treatment program where kids could come to us after school, and for about four hours they came to our site in Phillipsburg, they had group therapy, they had a lot of different programs. Again, that was a program that we were only able to keep open for a year because of lack of funding.

In closing, Catholic Charities and the staff at ADP strongly believes that only a continuum of services will make an impact on the growing issues associated with juvenile violence and delinquency. These services must be comprehensive, they must intervene with both the juvenile and their family, and they must be adequately funded.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you.

Either of you gentlemen to your left or right wish to add to that testimony?

RICHARD J. WATSON: Not at this point, but I would be willing to field any questions if there are any.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Fine.

Any questions of the Committee?

Assemblywoman Previte.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Who funds? I know you are under Catholic Charities. Does the county or the State in any way help fund this Program?

STEVE BERRY: The Juvenile Justice Commission, through a grant.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Please make sure that microphone is on.

MR. BERRY: Yes, it's on.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Get a little closer to it then. (witness complies) Thank you. This testimony is being recorded, so we need you to get a little closer.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Is this funded by State-community partnership money from the Youth Service Commission?

MR. BERRY: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Thank you.

MR. REICHERT: The only other funding is the Dioceses of Metuchen has contributed to about 15 percent of the budget over the last two years.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you, any other questions? (no response)

Thank you very much, gentlemen.

MR. REICHERT: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: I understand the Reverends Collazo, Sears, and Starling are here. Would you please come up to testify.

In addition, if you were not here at the beginning of this hearing, your name may have already been called. So if you are here to testify and you

have not filled out one of these sheets (indicating), which is located to your right, my left, please do so now so we can get you in. If you have filled one out already, you need not do anything further.

REVEREND FRANK COLLAZO: I have copies of my statement.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: We would be happy to receive written copies of your testimony.

REVEREND COLLAZO: My name is Reverend Frank Collazo. I am Executive Director of Youth Challenge of New York and New Jersey. We incorporated in 1978 and have been working with different youth individuals of all ages. But in the last few years we have noticed a large amount of youth under the age of 18 who are looking to change.

I myself have always been a minister. I come from Brooklyn, New York. I was homeless on the street. I spent about six years of my life in a home for boys, and as I grew up in the streets, I got into the gangs, in and out of jail. Many of my friends died in the streets. We were arrested, pushed around. We did the things that a lot of the kids today do. If we would have had the weapons that some of these kids have today, we could have created a lot more terror, but we did it with a lot less weapons and we did enough damage. And 90 percent of the individuals that walked with me at that time are either dead or in prison doing life. Some of them have even come into our program and we have been able to help. Some have died with AIDS, even in our program.

One of the things that I noticed from the early '70s when I began to work in the late '60s with the youth -- the one thing I noticed was that these gangs were changing, they were getting into the political arena. And these kids

don't just go out and target just anybody, they were antiestablishment. But I notice that today the kids out there are different. They hit anybody for no good reason.

When you begin to realize the type of life that some of these are living-- I know my father was gone before I was born, and a lot of people don't realize how easy it is for somebody like myself not to really have any feelings. When I met my real mother, I was 21 years old and I was in Rikers Island doing three years, and I know the feeling that I had. Some of these kids had never really experienced any type of an emotion from one of their parents.

In fact, some of them are living with drug addicts in the home or alcoholics. And we've had the -- I'd hate to say the privilege, but we've had the opportunity to work with some families, and many of them that have been hard-core drug addicts their kids follow right in their footsteps.

If the parent has been a gang member -- let me take somebody that's been in the -- let's say the Hell's Angels. Most likely their boy or the girl is going to fall in the same footsteps. One thing about it that we have found that kids today are looking for change, but you have to be able to provide it.

And I'm not following everything that way I've got it written there. But after I heard some of these people talking -- and I know exactly what is going on out there because I was out there myself. Peal Sears, who is going to speak in a minute, is one of our-- He's the Program Director right now. And 10 or 11 years ago he was on the streets homeless.

We have a lot of young people today, and this is one of the areas that I am going to be targeting. I'm going to be 58 years old, but I still feel like a teenager sometimes when I look at the kids and I identify with them. I speak to kids. You would think the sight of my age that they would not relate to, but

they relate and they listen -- I mean kids sometimes seven to eleven, to twelve, to thirteen, and it's only because they are looking for something different. These kids are looking for somebody that cares for their situation, and when we go into the streets-- And we have a lot of kids that we worked in the Perth Amboy area, and these kids come from the projects.

We were 14 years in this housing project program and we did the most. In fact, Paul was one of the products from there. We have another young man with me, James Johansen, who is from Paterson. And we found out that just because we are in the projects doesn't mean that somebody can't change it. It's the kids looking for attention, and I think you have to realize--

I heard the people from Covenant House, and I met some of those young people that go there and some of these kids that go there. After they leave there, what do they do? They have to have someplace to go. And I would dare say that we are trying to do the best that we can do, and one of the things I want to do in the future is be able to work with younger kids.

But I think in New Jersey-- And we have had a hard time even with the legislation. Right now we have to go for an (indiscernible) just to get a new building that we just purchased. It seems like everybody is always trying to get in the way of the people that are trying to do something for kids. And I think if anything that I can recommend to you is that you would consider maybe talking about the issue of helping municipalities, the people that are working, and the local community to be able to reach out to the kids. Like, you know, Reverend Starling here comes from Newark. That doesn't mean that the doors are all open to work with kids, and you know there is a lot of problems there.

But I thank God that I have been able to do for 20 years in New Jersey -- all together over 30 years now but able to reach kids that are now men that have changed because somebody took an interest in them. And I think that's the most important. We have to take an interest in our children.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you.

Reverend Sears.

REVEREND PAUL SEARS: Yes, I'm the Program Director now at Youth Challenge, a substance abuse residential facility. And as Reverend Collazo said, I wasn't always that way. I come from a one-parent home. As a matter of fact, I was adopted at the age of six days old. My real parents, I don't know where they were. All I really know is they were just teenagers.

Then, when adopted and at the age of six months, my adopted father took off, and I thank God for my adopted mother -- you know, she is my mother from six days old -- raised me and taught me the best things that she could do. But there was a serious problem in a broken down family. She had to work to try to make ends meet, which left me pretty much free to do what I wanted to do even though I was raised in a moral house. I didn't see my mother running around or drinking or anything like that, but just because of the pressure of the breakdown in the family caused me to go astray.

And by the time I was 14, I was already addicted to drugs and alcohol. I was already skipping school. I was, as one of the men said, had a learning disability, so I didn't really fit in, in school at the time. Only to find out years later all I needed was a little special attention, a little help. And as I went later on, I was valedictorian of the school that I graduated in college. When I was in elementary, they said he will never really amount to anything

and just kind of be maybe just a laborer somewhere. And so what had happened is, by the time I was 14, I was put into a reformatory for boys.

I will never forget leaving the reformatory. And one of the people that was supposed to watch over me said, "I'll see you again soon." I guess a vote of confidence. Shortly later I was returned for an additional 18 months. So I spent really four years of my teenage life really locked up, not out on the streets, and never really learned a lot in the reformatory system.

When I got out, with really no hope, I returned back to the same thing, eventually ended up living on the streets as a young man. And I think the greatest thing, as the gentleman said before, a relationship. Realizing that there is people out there that are not just a case number, not just a problem to put aside. But I really believe in mentoring. I really believe in spending quality time. Though we need finances and though we need good programs and nice facilities -- that is all great, but I really think and if any desire that I would see is to really be able to see more mentoring programs. Being able to even cut budgets and have people -- people -- volunteer their services and volunteering. That's where anything else I really, really see that in a church setting. I really see that in a spiritual realm of people of religions reaching out.

We are not only a residential facility, but twice a week we reach out to about 35 young people from the early ages of four years old that come to our facility all the way to the age of eighteen years old. And we've done seminars on safe sex. We have all of these programs, and then we are not teaching even our young people how to be parents. You know, you can go for English, and you can go for Spanish, and you can go for computer courses, but has anybody taken time to teach a young person who has made a mistake to

become pregnant to become a good parent? And that's where I think a relationship lies and needs to be out there.

We also, as the Covenant House said, on a regular basis we bring food to people's homes. Thirty or forty bags of groceries, not a lot, but just an entrance way into somebody's home to be able to speak to the parents and help them and try to (indiscernible) them in parent training and really to try to bring the family back together.

You see, I was, like I said, from a broken family, and my sister was the homecoming queen, my brother was an athlete and honor student, and then I was the black sheep. So I was raised properly but without proper authority and guidance and counsel, so easily run astray. If I went astray and I felt that I had a pretty decent upbringing, then how much more of those people that we work with and I work with a couple of times a week--

We bring in children, like I'm saying, four, five and six. Last week we had to send a kid home, five or six years old. He came to our facility, hair drenching wet, just got out of a shower, no jacket, short-sleeved shirt, and I said, "Go home. Why are you allowed to leave your house?" I really think we need parenting programs. I think that we need more role models. I think we need, even though this is a great thing and I'm honored to be here, people out on the streets. We need people to go out there and go back to even almost door-to-door neighborhood watch and just begin to saturate the neighborhood so we can create great role models.

When somebody like Youth Challenge invested their time into my life as a young man, a homeless man, and said, you know, you can really make it and really-- Like I said, I got a GED when I was in the program, and I went on to go to college and graduated college and now working. So I know from

a personal that if we get enough people out there into our cities to reach out, then I really believe that we can make a strong impact on our young people.

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you.

Reverend Starling.

REVEREND RICHARD STARLING: Yes, I am the Senior Pastor of the Christ Church of Newark. And one of the things that I have observed concerning our youth is their sense and their feeling of abandonment. And with this sense and feeling of abandonment -- the result of that is fear. One of the ways that we have attempted to deal with this issue is to express to them that we will not abandon them.

There are several accounts where abandonment might take place in their life. There are certain things such as uncontrollable circumstances. There is-- In my own family, my sister had passed away from a preliminary epilepsy, as well as her husband passed away a year before she did. So the children were there-- She left four kids behind, and they were staying with my mom and dad. But the oldest son, at the age of 15, listening to a lot of rap music and things of that nature and feeling a sense of abandonment that he was left alone even though they were there in the home with my mom and dad, he began to do certain things which were uncharacteristic. He began to say certain things which were uncharacteristic.

I was in my parents' home for 20 years and never did some of the things that he did. And so I had approached him about some of the things that he had done. And he had also went and ran away from home. And when he ran away from home, the people that he ran to instructed him to go back. And so then I was there, and I told him that once he ran away from home,

everything that was in his room no longer belonged to him, but it belonged to me. And I began to go in his room, and I took out all of the rap tapes, I took out all of the unhealthy videotapes that he had -- all these things that I felt was a bad influence to him. And I also made a list of the things that he began to do and how he began to conduct himself.

And I believe that one of the things that gave me the advantage in being able to do something like this with this young man is that he knew that I loved him unconditionally. So now we see a turnaround in his life in terms of him knowing that I love him unconditionally and that I'm not going to abandon him and allow him to conduct himself in certain ways.

And there are also some issues that we dealt with dealing with the city of Newark. One night after bible study my wife and I were riding on our way home on the corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and West Kenny Street. What happens on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is that young teenagers -- you can find them at any time of the day drag racing up and down the street in automobiles. Sometimes they ride up on the sidewalks, do whatever they have to do. Why it continues to happen I don't understand, because something can be done, you know, to stop the drag racing.

And so what had transpired is that as we were on our way home, we noticed about 25 children hanging out in the street. And one of the young men as we were crossing the intersection had a rock in his hand. And so he decided that he was going to throw the rock at our vehicle as we went through the intersection, and this about 10:00 p.m. And so it's late out and it's dark, and so he throws the rock and hits our van. My wife says, "Honey, I saw the person who threw it, pull over." And so we pulled the van over and we get out of the vehicle and we walk back to where some of the other men who saw what

had taken place was sitting on a car. And they informed us that the person who threw the rock -- they began to suggest that it was another individual who was holding a golf club in his hand standing in front of a liquor store. And so while we were there speaking to the young man who was sitting on the automobile, I explained to them the reason why we wanted to see the gentleman who threw the rock. We just wanted to convey our love toward him.

Then we continued on to introduce ourselves to the youth who was sitting on the automobile, and immediately as we introduced ourselves to them, we let them know about motives for wanting to speak with the young man. They immediately went and apprehended the young man and brought him back to us. And so-- He was a tall, 6 foot 3, young man, approximately about 16 or 17 years of age, and I grabbed him by the wrist. And he immediately starting jumping up and down just like he was a little kid apologizing, saying he didn't mean to do it.

And so, as I pulled him aside and I began to speak and interact with him, my wife began to ask the gentleman who was sitting on the car why did they lie to us and try to say that the gentleman who had the golf club was the one who threw the rock. And they explained to us that they didn't know we were church people and that they were afraid of God. And so there were some solutions that I believe would help deal with the youth, and that is letting them know that we will not abandon them.

Several things that I have listed here by getting our youth involved in Friday night activities -- these are some of the things that we do. Networking with other churches and having a get-together that is supervised by older, more mature individuals. We also are supporting their educational

endeavors. Some of the things that I have taken upon myself to do is to go to schoolhouses, talk to teachers, find out what is going on with anyone who is in the church or youth who would like me to. I want to know what is going on in the schoolhouses; I want to interact with their teachers.

Also, we provide mentoring programs. We've had teens come up and ask us to be their godparent. We also spend Saturdays with the teens. These are some of the things that we move forward to do. And also going to court. Whenever they get themselves or find themselves in trouble, we go to court with them, not to get them off, but to help them own up to their responsibility whenever they found themselves doing something they had no business doing.

And one of the things that had also transpired is that there were four young men, and one of them happened to be a member, a good friend of ours, and so he never had a record before. And so he was hanging out with three other young men, and they didn't realize that the town that they were in had a curfew. One of them was carrying a gun and the other one had the tools to break in a car. And so what had transpired is that the person who was carrying the gun never was convicted of a crime, but the other two gentlemen were convicted of a crime. They weren't carrying any weapon and they weren't carrying any tools to break into a car.

But these are types of things and challenges that we are faced with. And so now when we appear before the judge, the judge may have knowledge or certain awareness of one individual, but he may not know the scope or the long-ranged scale of what is really going on. And what I would like to see is that there is a relationship established with judges in our community and in

our court system with clergymen, some type of forum where we can interact with each other.

And I'm also -- counseling at Youth Challenge -- and Frank Collazo-- They are doing a tremendous work. We've networked together to try to support them the best way we can, and we've also, at our church, conducted a clothing drive where we have given out clothing to the homeless, and this year we are collecting coats and we are going to be handing out coats.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you very, very much.

Any questions from the committee of this panel? (no response)

Thank you again.

I understand Dr. Jeannette Haviland-Jones is here. Would you kindly come up. Actually, you were the second name we called this morning. We understood you had some time constraints.

JEANNETTE HAVILAND - JONES, Ph.D.: Thank you for trying to put me early. Parenting, trucks, and parking intervened.

I'm not an advocate for any particular program. In a sense I am coming in from left field here. I'm a university professor, and my areas of expertise are adolescent development and also emotional development. I'm the author of a textbook on the first, and of course, I lecture at Rutgers University on adolescent development. And I am the coeditor and founder of societies which study adolescent and emotional development. Also relevant to the question at hand, I did an internship for the juvenile detention facility, although many years ago, and continue to supervise clinical graduate students who are working with what you would consider to be extremely hard-core, difficult delinquents.

My own community in Clinton, New Jersey, where I have a son in the eighth grade, has seen a rise in patterns of behavior that lend themselves to violence, and I have noted a vacuum in the system that might prevent actual violence, which encouraged me to say yes when I was called to speak to this panel. There are steps we could take to prevent violence and repair trauma, and in my remarks, I will focus on two areas where legislation might possibly be beneficial.

As an expert with general background training, I first bring to your attention the uniqueness of the situations that we face presently. There are two historical changes that lead to our needing to search for modern solutions to violent problems even though the problems themselves are not modern obviously.

The first most important change in adolescent development is the secular trend. Obviously, I sound like a lecturing university professor, but I will make it relevant in a second. Since the 1970s, we had known there is a worldwide change in the age of puberty, that is the age at which humans first achieve their adult stature and adult sexual characteristics. About 200 years ago, European medical doctors began to record a three-month per decade shift in the age of puberty. This produces a little over two-year shift per century; although, there is some variation around the world.

Two hundred years ago, when legislators and educators wrote about people between the ages of 10 and 18, they had children in mind because those people were children. Presently, one sees more and more young adults at those ages. That is, in 200 years we have obviously slipped five years. The present age of puberty is 12 and heading towards 11 for girls, 13 and heading towards 12 for boys. And when our Constitution was established,

people would have been hitting puberty at close to age 18. So things like the age of adulthood, the age of knighthood -- all of these things in our ancient western history actually were developed to mark the passage from childhood to adulthood, which is no longer relevant.

The significance of this major change in human growth patterns is seldom acknowledged, but it is obvious that education, care for children, and legislation have generally not taken the status change into account. Adolescents have more adult characteristics than they have ever had in human history. We could use their adult characteristics in our community programs or we can ignore them.

The second most important change in adolescent development is the setting in which we place our adolescents. As recently as 1905, less than 5 percent of our population could be found in high schools. In less than a century, we have nearly achieved our goal of universal high school education. In all of human history, we are the first nation or society to form such a goal, and we are the first to come close to achieving it.

We have changed the place of adolescents in society and our expectations of them in just a few generations. So we have more mature people in more restricted settings. That has never been the case in human history. We have created new opportunities and we have created new challenges that require visions for the 21st century. We cannot plan to keep our mature young people in authoritarian settings, but must adapt the educational settings and the community involvement of young people.

Speaking directly to violence -- and I noted the issues that your mailing sent to me mentioned, in particular, some horrific cases in the United States in the past year or two where violence occurred in school systems and

often in unexpected ways. So I am going to speak to that and also place it in some context.

There is no evidence that criminal violence is actually increasing. In fact, all of the evidence is to the contrary. Young people have always been in the criminal system here and around the world. But there is increasing community concern with a rise in noncriminal hostility in educational settings, which is of course related to the maturation of young people and their restriction to educational settings, which means that's where we will find their problems as well.

Secondly, there are few notable and horrific exceptions to the general decrease in criminal violence, the ones that you noted in your mailings. This poses two problems that may very well not be related. Could we decrease noncriminal hostility that is not resulting in murder, and so forth, in educational settings? And can we prevent and ameliorate episodes of criminal behavior among adolescents?

I know that you hear of solutions to these problems from many places in the community, and I want to speak only to two general issues that would not, probably, usually be brought to your attention and that may profit from legislative thought.

Speaking to noncriminal hostility and particularly in educational settings, surprisingly there are a great many ways to approach this, most of which promote change in a positive direction. The programs that you have heard today, in fact, all promote positive change. Most school systems are probably aware of a variety of programs and would like to find funding for them. However, I want to speak to a neglected approach, make schools smaller.

Schools or schools within schools with about 500 students have greater educational and extracurricular participation from all students. They get more positive feedback about the school and about schooling in general, and they have less violence. In these settings, students take more responsibility that exercise their mature abilities and educators are more democratic.

The 500 rule -- seldom we have a magic number, but we have a magic number here -- has been known since the 1950s and has been shown repeatedly in urban, rural, private, public, etc., settings. The larger the school, the more students, parents, and teachers are alienated and the more problems occur. In spite of this, we do not have any more schools in the United States than we had in 1950. We have consolidated and made larger and larger schools. This is a mistake from the point of view of preventing hostile behavior or promoting self-control and positive behavior. Adolescents, and particularly mature adolescents, are very vulnerable to the more authoritarian context of the larger schools and easily alienated, fall through the cracks, etc.

The Legislature could examine the possibility of supporting more community schools and more divisions within schools. The benefits of services that often come with the larger schools might still be provided across, rather than within, school settings. In Clinton, where my children go to school, we recently passed the 500 mark in our K through eight school. And within two years of passing the 500 mark, we now have four incidents of violence in the school. In the previous 15 years, we had no incidences of violence. That is a typical pattern and one that is generally unrecognized.

Shifting from criminal hostility, but not necessarily abhorrent crime, to abhorrent criminal behavior, this occurs almost independent of social

and community settings, as you can see looking at the history of the past two years. Because it arises from multiple long-term sources in the family and in the community, the occurrence of such crimes is not the result of a single incident nor does a single incident of bad behavior predict such crimes.

It's here that our zero tolerance, for example, approaches violate knowledge. Severely punishing the general adolescent for a single bad violation does not prevent major crime. It only criminalizes young people for adolescent risk taking and carelessness. We know even from television shows, such as the *Profiler* that it is the pattern of behavior and not the single incident that is the warning sign. But there are no educational, social service, or juvenile justice groups that systematically address the need for schools and communities to profile and prevent major problems.

I was recently notified by people in my community that we might have a child with a violent profile. He kills small animals. He has access to powerful enemies -- powerful weapons, sorry. He sets fires. Other parents will not let their children ride on the bus with him. The school informed me, however, that he was not distinguished in the school setting and that they could not intervene. His neighbors had requested assistance from Social Services and from the police, but the child has not committed a crime, nor was his family officially in need of help, so help has not been forthcoming.

This child will only be attended to after he has committed a crime. The profile that he presents, however, is alarming. The schools do not have services for such children and probably should not because they are very rare. However, schools should have access to violent or trauma teams, probably situated in county community mental health centers. The only one I am aware

of operates out of the Rutgers Community Mental Health Center and Services, Middlesex County.

The violence and trauma team would assist children who have a risky profile, would assist children who have been suspended for risky behaviors, and would assist communities when there has been a trauma. It's also the case that we do not have access to trauma teams as sort of a routine response. I was in my office at the university about two years ago. I got a call from some school that happened to have my textbook sitting in the office. At 7:00 in the morning a child had committed suicide in the school and had been discovered by the administrators when they arrived in the school, and they were calling anywhere to get help.

There is no obvious response to that, and there should be trauma teams which would just show up. We actually-- This was not in Middlesex County, but we did send out a community mental health youth trauma team to that school to assist them to get through their day and the next couple of days and get a few things coordinated and set up. But there is nothing ordinarily that a school would have access to that would be of assistance there.

There are models of such teams available in New Jersey and they are incidentally-- The person who spoke about the New Zealand nationwide approach to solving disputes has coordinated that with trauma teams, and that probably would be a system that would be something that would take people into the next century.

The public school educators I've spoken to about the possibility of having teams available within the county, but not necessarily within the schools, are quite enthusiastic about the idea.

So in summary, for noncriminal hostility I recommend the Task Force consider promoting and funding smaller schools. For criminal violence I recommend the Task Force consider violence and trauma teams to work with the individual family, schools, and community.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Dr. Haviland-Jones, is-- Just one question I have. The youth that you addressed earlier that was killing small animals and setting fires and wasn't intervenable, why was that so? There are-- Certainly, the killing of the small animals, while it may not constitute a crime, is something that you may intervene for. In addition -- I'm not sure what setting the fires were being started, but depending on how and where they were being started that might or may not constitute a crime. So why were they not intervenable occurrences?

DR. HAVILAND-JONES: It may be in some community that they were, I don't know. In the town that this occurs, there are no local police, so the State Police have to be called in. They have been called several times and speak to the parents and depart. In terms-- DYFS has been called in and doesn't have authority to intervene.

The animals that he is killing are birds and squirrels, and he is not killing anybody's puppy, so far anyway. And so it is not illegal to kill birds and squirrels. And the fires that he has set have been in the woods behind his own house, on his property, and his parents defend his right to do that. It's just that neighbors are concerned. His carrying firearms did bring him to the attention of the police. But again there was no intervention.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: The reason why I asked is because it seems to me in every case you described there is an opportunity to intervene. Someone may have chosen not to.

DR. HAVILAND-JONES: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: I would hope that they made a different decision.

Any questions?

DR. HAVILAND-JONES: But I mean his case would be typical of those cases where horrible violence proceeds. I mean it's not the case he has ever actively done something that would usually alarm the authorities, but his profile would alarm in a social science.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Understandably so.

Thank you very much.

DR. HAVILAND-JONES: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Reverend Bryant Ali is also here. You were the number three name called.

REVEREND BRYANT ALI: I was in Room 11 following your instructions.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Okay, sorry about that if there was any incorrect information put out.

REVEREND ALI: Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Assembly council (*sic*). My name is Reverend Bryant Ali. I'm the Director of Pastoral Care at Broadway House for Continuing Care in the city of Newark. Broadway House is the only facility in the State of New Jersey with a 60-bed subacute care facility for persons living with AIDS. I also pastor to outreach ministries, better known as the REACH, in Hillside, New Jersey. And I think

when you talk about -- I don't have to think. I know when you talk about youth violence and that concept, one of the biggest things that we miss is the anger of our children. We failed to overlook what is happening just in the State of New Jersey when it surrounds *HIV* and AIDS.

And I think from my experience, when you go down and look at the youth, a lot of them are now incarcerated that now commit crimes. I heard some of the programs talk about where you have to bring one parent. What happens when youth don't have any parents or that parent is not able to come? And just with the stigma that we still have in the community, in 1998, dealing with AIDS, a lot of these people that live with AIDS are leaving behind four and five children, we are talking in adolescent years. And these children are now forced to make grown-up decisions with a childlike mind. So when you look at the essence of that, I believe that what I try to do in my ministry is reach one youth at a time.

One person talked about parenting. We have a clean ministry because myself as a recovered addict and a lot of the members of my church are young, a lot of them are teenagers, a lot of them are adolescents. What I have found out is you can't change the child until you get the parent changed first. So a lot of our members are growing up with their kids -- have grown up with their kids during addiction, and now they are trying to turn their lives around and deal with the child in that aspect.

Now, when you look at what's returned as youth violence-- I think that when you put it in their context and look at the prison population -- and the numbers that have been prior stated by one of the other presenters -- when you look at the prison population in our facility-- The reason why I bring up

Broadway House is over 70 percent of our population that has come through our facility are former inmates.

I say that 60 percent of our population is usually males. The fastest-growing population is females. Now, when you look at the family dynamics with male and female and you see that now these children not only have their father being locked up, but now their mothers are trying to take care of the families and then their mothers are dying with AIDS-- So when you look at the essence just in Newark alone, it's been estimated -- and I state documented cases in Newark alone-- It will be estimated by the year 2000 we have over 5000 orphans of mothers and fathers that have died to the AIDS virus just in Newark alone.

So when you look at that and you talk about violence, a lot of the children are put in a position to try to do adult things with no type of supervision, no type of concern, no type of care. And based on the stigma of what their parents died from a lot of times determines how the faith community deals with them, and I think that we have a breakdown.

One of the things that I suggest is that more care be provided for the grandparents. Mind you, when you talk about rap ministry or rap music so to speak, it's not the beat, it's the lyrics. I have rappers in my church. We rap, we do alternative workshops so to speak. I try to teach our young people that come from-- One of my young girls comes from Carter Highway Projects -- grew up there and came into our ministry when we started it four years ago. Her mother is a stone-cold crack addict. Her father lives in Baltimore who is an addict for years. Her uncle is in prison doing 30 years. Her sister just had a baby, another one, a second child, and she's not even 18 yet. And she grew up in that atmosphere.

I found that out when we brought her into the ministry, along with her grandmother who is her guardian and is raising her. She has been faithful to the ministry. She just came off a tour of black colleges. She's looking forward to going to school because we took her out of a setting and showed her something different, not in no great grand setting because our church is up over -- it used to be an X-rated theater, so we are up over there. So a lot of times you have to take away the concept of how people look at the church: this big grandiose building that people feel that if I am disenfranchised I am not able to come into that setting. So what the REACH try to do is say, "Hey, you can come into this setting. We don't have a dress code." And what we try to do is, then, teach the young people different dynamics.

One of my main focuses is on computer training, computer literacy. I teach them about Web page -- our church has a Web page that we were able to get free through New Jersey On-Line -- and teach them how to read the paper, so when you talk about numbers and everything-- Most of our community that participated in violence and are acting out violence do not read the paper, do not watch the news, do not get on the Internet because that's foreign to them. They don't understand the concept of E-mail addresses, the concept of fax machines. They don't understand the concept of going to look for a job.

So, then, when I speak to my young males, I try to look at alternatives. When they come in there and say, "Well, Reverend, you know we can make \$300,000 a year on the street." And I say that may be well and true. I'm a former drug dealer, I did corporate drug dealing. So I said, "You know you are not making it off the folk in the neighborhood. You're making it from the folk that come out of other neighborhoods and cop out of the city."

But I said, “Yes, but you have to look at it this way. If you make \$300,000 and you have to kill somebody in the process of making that money, you are going to do 30 years. And when you break that down, you haven’t made much.” Now, if they go and take this McDonald job and you end up becoming a manager and then you end up being a franchise owner, now you have turned around the concept. Not only are you free, but you made more money legally that you can keep. And they said, “Well, Reverend, we never heard it that way before.” But I said, “That’s the reality, that’s what you have to learn. The system is set up for you to fail.”

So I said, “Why would you become part of the prison system?” I said think about it. The person-- (indiscernible) We just had a big article about the big jail in Newark, a whole 2500 inmates, state-of-the-art prison. They got \$20-some million set aside to build up this facility. And I said, “Now when you think that that came up, let’s look at this factor. Instead of being the inmate that’s in there eating, you should be one of the contractors that want to get the food contract. Why? Because \$10 a day for every inmate, speaking hypothetically, 2500 inmates, that adds up to about \$8 million-a-year contract when a person is doing 30 years.”

So what I try to do and what I have found to be very successful is a lot of time we try to attack things from a big scope instead of dealing with what is really very successful, and that’s one-on-one basis. And our goal is to make one child our goal, you know, one soul our goal. And what I try to do in a way, and it is growing and it has been successful, is deal with that individual from where they are at and then give them instruction and example to where they can be and what they can become.

So I really believe that when you want to deal with youth and violence, you are going to deal with the AIDS issue because that is what is devastating our urban communities. And the numbers are rising within the African-American Hispanic community. Women of color are the fastest-growing number in the heterosexual population. And these problems are not going to go away, the virus is not going away, and these are our kids that are coming up -- and we are not even going to talk about children with AIDS; that's a whole different subject in itself.

But that will help when you start dealing with some of the real issues, which is a lot of them. Number one, from my perspective and where I do it, so then in the mist of our enclosing, a lot of our children's anger is based and centered around grief, and that's an issue that we don't deal with. We live in a society where we like to be happy go lucky and everything is going to be all right and we keep on covering up. And a lot of our children are acting out because they are grieving. They are grieving. They do not understand.

And what I try to do is do grief intervention with a lot of our kids. I used to do trauma pastoral care at University Hospital, my clinical training. And I would watch kids come in where they would be tough on the outside, but when I take them back there to see their friend on a slab with half his head blown off, they would react like every other child. They would cry, they would look for somebody to care, to help them with their grief. So then they become angry. My mom is already dead, my daddy is locked up for 30 years, I hate everybody. So one of the concepts is dealing with that anger and reaching them and dealing with AIDS.

And then the only facility in the state-- In spite of the numbers -- I deal with a lot of kids, and we've only been open four years, and in the mist

of that we have went through over 250 deaths. And we deal with-- Our population is from 18. And I think that's another thing -- from 18 all the way up. I've had them as young as 18 and as old as 75. And in the mist of that, my 18-year-olds and 19-year-olds, when they become infected-- I mean they got infected at 12 or 13. So that concept is from a child's mind. "This happened to me. I don't care who else it happens to."

So part of it is grief, a lot of it is anger, and a lot of it is that we put a lot of responsibility on children and say let their parent come, but most kids would ask you, "What is a parent?" where I live.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you, Reverend.

Any questions? (no response)

Thank you very much.

Our last witness is Bryan Miller.

Bryan, as you are coming up, you signed up to speak on two bills. I'm not sure what those bills are, but this committee isn't taking any testimony on legislation. We have no legislation before us. If you wish to suggest that those two pieces of legislation are part and parcel to the adolescent violence issue, you may do so. And if you wish to suggest that the committee act on or foster those or other pieces of legislation, you may do so. But on specific bills we are not hearing testimony for or against -- I see you are in favor, obviously -- for or against any piece of legislation.

Thank you.

BRYAN MILLER: No, I understand.

Yes, I do think it's part and parcel to the domestic violence problem -- excuse me, adolescent violence problem.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: I made the same mistake before. Don't worry about it.

MR. MILLER: Thanks.

I am Bryan Miller. Thank you for allowing me to come here today. I'm Executive Director of Ceasefire New Jersey. We are the statewide coalition of groups and individuals devoted to reducing gun violence. I am here to inform you about an exciting means to reduce gun violence among children and teens, as well as existing legislation that would encourage its use.

As you are no doubt aware, nearly 200 children in America 14 and under are killed unintentionally by gunfire every year, four times as many are hospitalized. There are about 1400 firearms suicide deaths per year of children and teens 19 and under. And the names Springfield, Pearl, Edinboro, Paducah, and Jonesboro remind us what can happen when disturbed adolescents and children get their hands on firearms.

Technology exists today to substantially lessen chances of three types of violent acts that affect youths. Those three acts are kids or teens getting their hands on handguns and accidentally shooting themselves, a neighbor, a sibling, someone close to them, that's one. The second is disturbed adolescents using handguns to threaten or harm classmates or teachers. And the third are despondent teens who get their hands on dad's gun, if you will, and commit suicide with it.

The technology exists now to design and manufacture what we call childproof handguns. These are handguns that, as I said before, are designed and manufactured so they can only be operated by an adult authorized user or users. There are patents out on over 30 different techniques to childproof

handguns. They range from a relatively low-tech radio transponder receiver system that manufacturing is working on, to systems that involve fingerprint identification and verification, palm print -- there are various biometric techniques. As I said, there are over 30 different patents out on techniques.

This technology has existed for over 20 years. I met a man recently from Brooklyn who was a dentist. When he and his wife had a baby girl, he sent his handgun away in answer to a magazine ad. When it came back shortly, it could only be operated if the user was wearing a special magnetic rim. His daughter is now out of the house, she's in college. This is 20 years ago. For 20 years, the handgun industry has been able to childproof handguns.

The two bills that you mentioned before-- The Assembly bill A-780, I'm happy to say that two of your members are on that bill. Assemblyman Smith is a prime sponsor and Assemblywoman Previte is a cosponsor as well. The bill would, after three years after enactment, limit all private handgun sales of new handguns in the state to handguns that have been childproofed. It exempts the police and other official bodies. That just deals with private handguns, and its basic focus is to deal with the handgun violence that occurs in the home among children and adolescents.

There is broad public support for the bill as represented by-- Yesterday we had a press conference where we released the results of a poll that we did in the State of New Jersey of Republican voters only, and it showed 73 percent support among Republican voters for A-780.

It's my hope that this committee (*sic*), if it can, would support this legislation. We think it's a fine way to reduce the mechanics, if you will, of violence -- or one major mechanic of violence, which is gun violence as it affects children and teens.

And I thank you very much for your time.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you very much.

Mr. Miller, you have a box next to you. Is that a demonstration item? Is that a prop, or is that something personal?

MR. MILLER: It's-- If I had questions-- I'll open it if you don't mind. It's a toy gun, by the way. It's just plastic.

This is one of the technologies that's available. It's made by a company called Oxford Micro Devices in Shelton, Connecticut. As you can see it's a rubber -- actually, vinyl/plastic gun, and in the back of it is a chip. It can go here or it can go here. (indicating) But for our purposes it's here.

This is a fingerprint-- It's called a fingerprint verification and capture system. And what it essentially does is it's integrated by another chip that's in the handle with the operation of the gun. The gun would not have the mechanical safety, so the safety could not be taken off of it mechanically and operated. It is inoperable until the right person whose fingerprint is registered in here -- and there can be up to 10 fingerprints registered -- picks the gun up and touches this chip in the back. It takes less than a tenth of a second, less than a heartbeat, for the gun now to be enabled if the correct person has touched it. It's pressure sensitive in the front of the handle so that as long as it has been touched and enabled and held, the gun can be operated by that person. As soon as that person releases the front of the gun, the handle like this (indicating), it is now inoperable to anyone until the process has gone through again.

So that this gun at the point of purchase would be -- different fingerprints would be registered, and in New Jersey no one under 18 is allowed to own a handgun or operate a handgun so that no teens or children could be

registered in the gun. It could be registered for a man and his wife or an adult brother or whatever. So it would be limited-- This operation would be limited strictly to adults, authorized users.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Miller. I just wanted to add one thing. In being politically correct you mentioned dad's gun. There is a pretty sizeable group of women who from time to time are lobbying for other legislation here who would probably like you to say mom's gun or sister's gun because they are lobbying pretty heavily in a different direction, not necessarily on this issue, but certainly on a gun issue.

MR. MILLER: No, I agree, and I would say they are pretty sizable in terms of the amount of time they spend in here, actually in terms of their numbers among the general population and what they are lobbying for, which is concealed carry of weapons. I think there is a very small percentage of the population in New Jersey--

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Well, I don't know about compared to population, but I have met quite a number of them here.

MR. MILLER: As have I.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: Thank you very much.

MR. MILLER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DiGAETANO: The committee will stand adjourned for today. There will be at least one additional hearing. We are trying to schedule it for some time in December. The date has not been set yet.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)

