



PRESS RELEASE



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From the desk of Mayor Jose "joey" Torres

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CONTACT: Jerry Speziale, Police Director
(973) 572-6746

"Paterson Safe City Initiative" an Investment in Human Capital
*"Investment in Human Capital" Campaign Offers Offenders Alternatives and Addresses
Scourge of Violent Crimes in the City*

Paterson, NJ -- Yesterday, April 27, Mayor Jose 'joey' Torres joined by members of several street groups, representatives from the Paterson Police Department, the National Network of Safe Communities, the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office and Professor David M. Kennedy from John Jay College of Criminal Justice met in a 'call-in' meeting to hear about the "Safe City Initiative," part of the administration's "Investment in Human Capital" initiative.

"Today marks a turning point in our city's history. Beyond a shadow of a doubt the level of violence in our city is unacceptable and we will do everything in our power to remedy this situation. It does take a village to raise a child and I am a fervent believer of the incredible value of the human capital, and how important it is to invest in it. We are offering and challenging those living outside the law with a chance to make a change in their lives. I am tired of visiting funeral homes and tired of the senseless feuds, with brothers killing brothers."

Mayor Jose 'joey' Torres.

Over a year ago, the City of Paterson entered into a collaborative effort with the John Jay College of Criminal Justice to directly address the issue of violent crime in Paterson. The program, titled *"The Paterson Safe City Initiative,"* is part of a targeted, long-term strategic plan to combat violent crime and the reinvestment in human capital.

"The issues of crime and its effect on a community are undoubtedly complex and multi-faceted. That suggests that any true solution must likewise incorporate a tiered approach that seeks to address the problem from a multiplicity of perspectives. Mayor Torres and Professor Kennedy and his team at John Jay have put a tremendous amount of time and thoughtful effort in coming up with what we believe will be a program that along with effective policing will result in safer streets, cleaner neighborhoods and an enhanced quality of life." - **Jerry Speziale, Police Director.**

A partnership of the federal, educational, faith based, state and county law enforcement communities, the "Safe City Initiative," came together to offer alternative visions, guidance and structure designed to point young lives in a different direction and offer a last chance alternative to incarceration.

“We’re committed to this partnership, and we are meeting regularly; and our goal is to stop gun violence in this city. Let me make you a promise right now – I promise you - you do not want your case to go federal.” - **AUSA Justina Geraci – US Attorney’s Office**

Professor David M. Kennedy from John Jay College of Criminal Justice spearheaded studies, which indicated that only approximately 1% of the population is responsible for over 90% of the violent crime. By identifying and targeting those specific individuals and groups for enforcement and rehabilitation, a significant reduction in the number of violent criminal episodes could be realized.

“Call-in meetings, like the one in Paterson, make it clear that the community cares about group members but rejects violence. With this work, Paterson joins a network of cities around the country dedicated to improving public safety and rebuilding fractured relationships between law enforcement and communities.” - **Professor David M. Kennedy, John Jay College of Criminal Justice.**

Paterson’s Safe City Initiative’s strategy also states that violence will result in a stronger enforcement response.

“Today, we are changing our model of policing. We are identifying that 1% that is most likely to be killed, or kill someone. Any member of this group has the option of asking for help and they will receive help; however, if they continue the violence they will be arrested.” William G. Fraher; Chief of Police.

While enforcement remained a necessary component, it took a back seat to alternative methods and strategies for dealing with select targeted offenders. The city’s Human Capital Investment Campaign places an emphasis on indentifying those individuals suitable for early intervention, rehabilitation and direction. The initiative mirrors elements of the New Jersey Re-Entry Corporation’s program as a strategy for safer streets and neighborhoods.

The City of Paterson’s Re-entry program, “Center of Hope” located at 147 Montgomery Street, offers those returning from incarceration, support programs, such as: job training, the expungement of records, and housing assistance.

“We recognize that effective case management is essential to the reintegration of those returning from incarceration, our program strives to offer positive alternatives that lower the potential for new criminal behaviors and recidivism. Our NJRC model is based and built upon the proven reentry success in other cities, and we are happy to assist local programs in making the case for reentry.” – **James McGreevey, NJ Reentry Corporation, Board of Directors.**

“The Passaic County Prosecutor’s Office remains committed to the safety of the citizens of our county. As the Prosecutor of Passaic County I have seen firsthand the harm that this violence has done to so many families. I want to assure each of you that the senseless gun violence will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. The violence must stop now.” **Camelia Valdes, Passaic County Prosecutor.**

“We are here for you. To assist you and any group member that wants to get help. However, you have to want it, and you have to get away from the life, no matter how seductive you think it is. It’s your choice.” **Omar Brown – Eva’s Village/Men Amongst Men.**

The City of Paterson has established a dedicated Hotline for those ready for a change, 973-569-5164.

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