

Good morning. My name is Bob Zimmerman and I am the President of Local 810. We represent the 550 probation, parole and hearing officers of the First Judicial District. I thank Councilman Savage for convening this hearing today so that we can begin a dialogue with the City Council, the administrators of the First Judicial District and all the agencies of the criminal justice system that serve the citizens of Philadelphia.

We all know about the crime and violence that is plaguing our City. We at 810 absolutely support the effort to hire more police, probation and parole officers, Assistant District Attorneys and other professionals that can work on this crucial issue. We also recognize the budgetary restrictions that face our City. Therefore, today I would like to offer some ideas that I and my members have discussed and we, from our years of experience, feel would make us more effective and productive officers.

Many of the crimes being committed in Philadelphia are being committed by individuals already under the supervision of the Courts. Therefore, the members of Local 810 know that officers need to have a more manageable case load so that more intensive supervision of offenders is happening. We know that hiring more officers will help with this issue, but we also think it is important to have more officers in the neighborhoods and not supervising offenders from an office in Center City.

We encourage more intensive orientation and ongoing training for our officers; the formation of more specialized units like the Youth Violence Reduction Project (YVRP) in juvenile and adult court and gun court in adult; ongoing in-service training for our officers so that they can share their experiences with administrators to better supervise the offenders and ultimately protect our citizens. We would like to work more closely with the Philadelphia Police Department. It is imperative that I remind you that

in many instances Local 810 Adult Probation and Parole Officers are able to conduct a search without a warrant. This is an effective crime fighting tool.

Retention of our officers is a very important issue. We have a 40% turnover in officers every 3-5 years. The officers of Local 810 strongly advocate that changes be made so that we will be able to retain officers who will act as teachers and role models to new officers. We lose our officers to federal positions and recently to positions in the surrounding counties. Therefore, we must be competitive. Today we are here to join our partners in the criminal justice system to ask for more officers to better manage case loads, but we hope to have additional opportunities to address you regarding other issues facing our officers such as improved working conditions, competitive salaries and updating of personnel policies.

Again we appreciate this opportunity to open the lines of communication with City Council, the First Judicial District and our partners in the criminal justice system. We are all in this crisis of crime and violence together. Local 810 members are highly professional and knowledgeable and stand ready to work with you to alleviate violence in our city.

Respectfully submitted,
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