

**Testimony of Deputy District Attorney Angel L. Flores**  
**Philadelphia City Council**  
**Special Committee on Criminal Justice Reform**  
**May 23, 2016**

The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office has created numerous programs to reduce youth involvement in the juvenile justice system. We have also partnered with various stakeholders on other programs to lessen the impact that the juvenile justice system has on the youth and to prevent graduation to the adult system.

**In Schools:**

- District Attorney Seth Williams' Anti-Bullying Program geared for elementary and middle school students.
- Assistant District Attorneys invited to schools to discuss various issues in Criminal Justice.

**Youth/Law Enforcement Training:**

- Along with members of the Disproportionate Minority Contact Committee, we conduct sessions for youth to discuss issues they may have with law enforcement personnel in an effort to improve youth/law enforcement relationships.

**Lace Up, Speak Up:**

- We participate with the Commission on Human Relations to engage youth in a discussion with police officers at recreation centers throughout the city, after which we "lace up" our sneakers and play basketball.

**Truancy Prevention – "Project Go"**

- Truancy is a serious problem. Its implications are vast, affecting both the individual and society. Children who are truant are more likely to be delinquent and violent. Probably the single most important crime prevention strategy we can employ -- both for the short and long term -- is to actively work to keep children in school. Not only will reducing truancy prevent future crime, it is likely to reduce current crime as well. When kids are in school, they are less likely to commit crimes.
- *Project Go* recognized that school attendance problems must be addressed as early as possible - before the child's behavior is ingrained and while the parent/guardian still exercises some control.
- Identifies the barriers and obstacles that causes the truancy problem. Utilizes services through DHS to overcome the barriers/obstacles.

**Youth Aid Panels**

- It is a unique program for 1<sup>st</sup> time juvenile offenders accused of a low-level offense.
- Offenders are required to appear before a panel of community members, who volunteer their time to participate in this program.

- These panels hold the juveniles accountable for their offenses by requiring that they admit their involvement in the incident. The panel and the juveniles enter into a “contract” that may require the juveniles to do community service, paying restitution, and/or attend treatment or counselling sessions.
- If the juvenile fulfills all the conditions of the “contract”, he or she will avoid prosecution and a juvenile record. Failure to complete the “contract” causes the cases to be sent to court for prosecution.
- If the juveniles remain arrest-free for 6 months after the completion of the “contract”, their records will be expunged.

#### Reporting Consent Decrees

- A diversion program for first time offenders that is similar to the ARD program in Criminal Court.
- The DAO enters into an agreement with the juveniles that they will complete the conditions agreed to by the parties. Conditions can be the payment of restitution, curfew, stay away orders, counselling, etc.
- Program duration is 6 months and if the conditions are met the case is discharged. The juveniles can then move for an expungement of their case.

#### Juvenile Drug Treatment Court

- This program is available to newly-arrested juveniles ages 14-17 with a substance abuse problem, who are charged with a nonviolent offense and have no prior adjudication for a violent offense.
- Treatment Court is a diversion alternative designed to engage the substance-abusing juvenile offenders in appropriate drug treatment under the supervision of the presiding Treatment Court Judge and the Treatment Court Review Team.
- Provides both out-patient and in-patient treatment based on determination of the needed level of care.
- One year after graduation the arrest may be expunged from the record of the juvenile if the youth remains crime free and drug free.

#### Crossover Court

- This court handles cases in which defendants are identified as having delinquency and dependency issues. It is for non-violent offenders who have a history of dependency issues and services through DHS are in place to deal with the dependency issues.

#### Working to Restore Adolescent Power (WRAP Court)

- Is a pilot program aimed at helping youth with delinquency and dependency matters who have been identified as being victims of commercial sexual exploitation/human trafficking.
- WRAP Court will provide treatment and services through the dependent system rather than the delinquent system. The youth is actively engaged in the decision making process at every stage.

- If the juveniles successfully complete the program, the cases will be eligible for an early expungement.

Thank you for asking me to participate in this hearing. We are proud of the work we do in seeking to have our youths avoid the juvenile justice system and in limiting their overall involvement in the system.