

**Public Safety Enhancement & Violence Reduction**  
**10-Point Action Plan Framework**

**OVERVIEW**

A statewide workforce crisis, coupled with various social and public policy factors, have resulted in a spike in criminal activity, particularly drug-related violent crime. These trends are negatively impacting the public safety and welfare of the state.

Governor Scott has directed the commissioner of Public Safety and other agency and department executives – in partnership with other law enforcement entities, prosecutors, and the judiciary – to implement the following 10-point plan to:

- Reinforce frontline law enforcement capacity and prioritize immediate reduction, prevention and prosecution of violent crime statewide.
- Expand prosecution capacity and help the courts address their backlog of cases.
- Prioritize long-term violence prevention policies, systems, and services.

The Governor has further directed the commissioner of Public Safety to convene all local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies as soon as possible to:

- Share all available intelligence and data to develop a shared understanding of the statewide public safety environment.
- Allocate additional assets to the statewide effort.
- Strengthen, and work closely together to continuously improve, the intelligence-driven response necessary to ensure public safety and reduce violent crime.

**REINFORCE FRONTLINE PUBLIC SAFETY CAPACITY & PRIORITIZE REDUCTION, PREVENTION & PROSECUTION OF VIOLENT CRIME STATEWIDE**

1. **Prioritize VSP Mutual Aid** – The Vermont State Police (VSP) has been, and will remain, available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week and 365-days a year for call outs to assist with large cases, special teams and specific circumstances. VSP will preserve its ability to support local law enforcement agencies by responding to incidents that exceed local capacity. Recent examples include special teams' collaboration, crime scene processing, major crimes investigations and use of the VSP Critical Action Team to support municipal partners, upon request.
2. **Shift Special Teams Troopers to Coordinate with Federal ATF Task Force** – Special teams troopers will be temporarily assigned to coordinate with federal partners, and municipal police departments as necessary, to help confront, stop and prosecute the surge in gun and drug related criminal activity. As noted above, the State will also convene all local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to develop a shared understanding of the statewide public safety environment and strengthen the intelligence and data-driven response to reduce violent crime this plan is intended to achieve.
3. **Better Align & Deploy State Law Enforcement Resources** – To improve coordination and operational efficiency across State law enforcement assets – including Vermont State Police, Department of Motor Vehicles, Agency of Natural Resources, and the Department of Liquor

and Lottery – the Governor has directed senior leaders to meet weekly to address operational needs and to identify specific and actionable ways to enhance statewide law enforcement operations and response. This has already resulted in improved coordination and efficiency of routine patrols on highways and state lands, and of investigations related to crimes on state lands, fraud investigations, accidental shootings, animal cruelty cases and DUI crash investigations.

4. **Augment the State Law Enforcement Workforce** – While law enforcement organizations work to fill the increasing number of vacant positions, the State will invite recently retired law enforcement officers to temporarily return to service to help confront public safety needs. There are almost 100 retired sworn law enforcement officers from across the State enterprise who are below the mandatory retirement age. VSP will begin by contacting retirees to assess their interest in temporary assignments for the purpose of augmenting special teams and backfilling vacancies on a temporary basis to address the most immediate service needs of Vermonters. Retirees would be assigned based on their skill set, experience and interest. Temporary duty would not impact their retirement benefits.

#### **EXPAND PROSECUTION CAPACITY & HELP THE COURTS ELIMINATE THEIR BACKLOG**

5. **Coordinate with the Attorney General to Facilitate Effective Allocation of Prosecutorial Resources** – The Office of the Attorney General (AGO) will facilitate effective allocation of prosecutorial resources as needed across the State. The AGO, in cooperation and collaboration with the Office of States Attorneys and Sheriffs, will assign prosecutors to focus on and facilitate prosecution of major crimes statewide, including all levels of violence associated with drug and human trafficking.
6. **Work with the Judiciary to Eliminate a Backlog of Cases** – Several factors, including the pandemic and available resources, have contributed to backlogs across the 14-county criminal court system. The judicial branch must eliminate this backlog and process cases in a timelier manner to ensure the swift delivery of justice to which all Vermonters are entitled. This will continue to require open and sustained communications with the executive branch and the public. While there are process improvements that can only be made by the Judiciary – such as continuing to expand the number and type of proceedings in the courthouses, implementing procedural improvements and resuming some pre-pandemic processes – the courts have identified the intersection of some processes with executive branch agencies, including the Department of Corrections, the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Mental Health, that could be streamlined. The Governor has directed these departments to implement process changes to facilitate court proceedings.

#### **PRIORITIZE LONG-TERM VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICIES, SYSTEMS & SERVICES**

7. **Expand the role of the Fusion Center (Vermont Intelligence Center (VIC))** – The Department of Public Safety will work to expand the VIC into a statewide crime center to monitor and report, in real-time, on serious and violent crime for the most effective deployment of limited resources and to analyze crime data and trends for reporting to stakeholders, policymakers and the public. This step is essential to having effective situational awareness and will require some

reorganization and the addition of analysts. Additional support from federal agencies and the Vermont Legislature may also be required.

**8. Apply Vermont's Pandemic Response Model to Public Safety, Social Services & Mental Health**

– As it did in its nation-leading pandemic response, State government must measure activity and respond in real-time, identify causal factors and take action to prevent crime and better serve the vulnerable. The Governor has directed relevant state agencies/departments with public safety, social service, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and mental health missions to meet at least weekly to identify and track hot spots, repeat offenders and others known to law enforcement and social service providers. Their objective will be to swiftly deploy needed interventions and/or services, and to actively disrupt patterns and prevent interactions with the criminal justice system. This strategy acknowledges violent crime is often a symptom of misguided policies and/or inadequate coordination between programs and systems.

**9. Reconstitute the Violence Prevention Taskforce by Executive Order**

– To bring focus and clarity to a longer-term prevention strategy that prioritizes early interventions for children and families, the Governor will establish the Violence Prevention Taskforce (VPT). The VPT will be composed of senior executive branch officials appointed by the Governor and responsible for implementation of specific and measurable community violence prevention policies across state government, with an emphasis on preventing gun crimes in schools and in community settings. This taskforce is advisory to the Governor, and will report regularly to him on its view of the effectiveness of violence prevention policy; coordinate violence prevention policy implementation across state government; identify needed reform of existing laws that do not adequately holding offenders accountable in order to deter violent crimes; and coordinate federal funding opportunities to better prevent suicide and community violence, facilitate better use of ERPO implementation/enhancements and significantly improve school safety and school violence prevention.

**10. Appoint a Director of Violence Prevention**

– To lead the work of the Violence Prevention Taskforce (VPT), the Governor will appoint a new Director of Violence Prevention. This appointee will report directly to the Office of the Governor and be responsible for ensuring the VPT is achieving real results. The Director will also work with the Agency of Education and school safety teams to expand the use of behavioral risk assessments in schools; develop a plan to ensure every school is using and updating assessment tools; and develop a streamlined response and reporting system for threats. The Director will also work with the Attorney General, the States' Attorneys and Sheriffs and the departments of health and mental health to maximize the use of ERPO laws statewide, among other responsibilities.

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