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D.A. McMahon Joins Elected Leaders, Non-Violence Groups, Violence Interrupters, and Community Organizations To Unite Against Gun Violence

Staten Island DA's office has met with numerous non-violence groups in past several weeks including True 2 Life, Mothers Against Senseless Killings, Occupy the Block, the Canvas Institute and more to discuss the root causes of gun violence and what we can do before an individual resorts to carrying a gun

Staten Island, N.Y. – In light of recent tragedies in Buffalo, NY and Uvalde, Texas, and with June marking Gun Violence Awareness Month, DA McMahon today gathered with local community organizations, non-violence groups and violence interrupters along with local elected officials to send a unified message that gun violence has no place here on Staten Island. After engaging with multiple elected and community leaders as well as non-violence groups over the past several weeks, DA McMahon, his office, and partners stood together on the steps of Borough Hall today to detail solutions to end gun violence on Staten Island and reaffirm their commitment to working together to both get guns off the street, hold accountable those who carry and use firearms, and most importantly, address the underlying issues that lead people to carry and use guns in the first place.

District Attorney Michael E. McMahon said, “We gather today on the steps of Borough Hall exactly two weeks after the unspeakable tragedy in Uvalde, Texas, which claimed the lives of 19 students and two teachers, a little over three weeks since the racist attack in Buffalo that took 10 of our fellow New Yorkers away from us, only days since the shootings in Tulsa and Philadelphia, and almost a month to the day of the first fatal shooting of this year here on Staten Island, to send a unified message against gun violence. Protecting New Yorkers and all Americans from the scourge of gun violence must remain a top priority for leaders across government and that is why I am proud to stand together with our many partners to send a unified and clear message that gun violence will not be tolerated in our communities.

The Staten Island DA's office has and always will treat gun crimes seriously – we request bail and jail on every case that involves an illegal firearm and prosecute those who carry, brandish, or fire illegal weapons to the fullest extent of the law. With that said, as District Attorney I firmly believe that a crime prevented is always better than a crime prosecuted. In preparation for Gun Violence Awareness Month and with the official start of

summer just around the corner, it's imperative that we do everything in our power now to prepare for and reduce any form of violence but especially gun violence that we may encounter. That's why my office was proud to meet and partner with community leaders, organizations, and non-violence groups like True 2 Life, Mothers Against Senseless Killings, Occupy the Block, the Canvas Institute and more in the past several weeks to discuss the root causes of gun violence and what we can do before an individual resorts to carrying a gun. These were a series of incredibly informative and educational meetings for my office. Gun violence and any form of violence for that matter does not occur in a vacuum. It is the result of poverty, food insecurity, housing instability, mental health resource deserts, and neighborhood neglect."

DA McMahon continued, "Let me be clear though; if you carry, brandish, or fire a gun here on Staten Island our partners in the NYPD and my office will hold you accountable. There must be consequences for that level of recklessness and violence. No one gathered today is naïve when it comes to this issue, but we know what it takes to prevent these crimes. The solutions are sitting there right in front of us. We need more funding for our schools and afterschool programs. We need more mentors and job opportunities for communities in need and easier access to resources and information for those seeking it. Improved housing conditions and neighborhoods free of litter and graffiti to regain and instill a sense of pride in one's community. We need a criminal justice system that is dedicated to working hand-in-hand with the community from your District Attorney down to your local beat cop.

I'm proud to stand with my fellow elected officials and the incredible organizations who are on the ground and do the work day in and day out, but an issue this big cannot fall just on one person or group. It's contingent upon all of us to do our part to steer folks in a positive direction and prevent gun violence before it ever even gets to that point. We cannot afford to let any more time pass without taking significant action on this issue both from a legislative and community-based level. I urge my fellow Staten Islanders to join us today and this entire month to amplify this message and stand up against gun violence."

Council Member Kamillah M. Hanks said, "Our communities are being absolutely devastated by gun violence. Our words, thoughts, and prayers are no longer an adequate response toward putting a stop to this violence. As Chair of the New York City Council Committee on Public Safety, as a Staten Islander, and as a mother — I am deeply committed to working to prevent our young people from getting involved with gun violence and to getting guns off our streets. Gun violence and crime are impacting people's lives at younger and younger ages, and we must work together to prevent that from happening — and intervene if it has already happened — before it is far too late."

Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella said, "We need to work together to stop the senseless killings of adults and children who should be able to feel safe in any environment. Something must be done to help the people who have the worst of intentions and have the ability to get their hands on a weapon. We want to continue to work with DA McMahon and his team, and to be proactive on this issue. We must do all we can to prevent gun violence on our streets and in our neighborhoods. We must acknowledge that there are some bad people still walking freely. Part of our efforts must be to get these bad and/or mentally ill individuals off the streets. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the victims of these shootings as we move toward a solution."

Mike Perry, project manager and conflict mediator with True2Life Staten Island, said, "If we intend on decreasing and stopping Gun Violence, we must address the underlying issues that cause it. Poverty, Mental Health and a Lack of resources in our communities are just a few. We cannot arrest our way out of this. Credible Messengers/Violence Interrupters are the key to solving this problem, we have the data to prove it."

DA McMahon concluded, "As of June 5th, there have been 628 people shot in New York City in this year alone, compared to 676 at this time last year. Eleven (11) Staten Islanders have been shot this year and while that makes up just 1.75% of shootings citywide, one shooting is one too many. Here on Staten Island, shootings are down 35.3% and gun arrests are up nearly 25.4% due to the spectacular work from our partners in the NYPD. Across the city, gun arrests are up 3.0% (2,061 this year so far as compared to 2,001 this time last year). What's most heart-breaking is when you look at the age of those arrested for carrying guns. 15% of gun arrests

on Staten Island are under 20 years old. 55% are under 30 years old. Just yesterday, less than a mile away from where we stand today, a 16-year-old boy was shot in his back outside of the Richmond Terrace Houses. On the same day, a 14-year-old boy was stabbed outside of I.S. 49 in Stapleton. We simply must do better for our children.”

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