

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Nov. 3, 2016

CONTACT: Julie Biehl (312-503-2386)
Stephanie Kollmann (312-503-1479)

“Building a Safe Chicago” report: Attack root causes of violence with a comprehensive crime prevention plan

CHICAGO – More than two dozen community groups and criminal justice reform advocates on Thursday issued a report urging Chicago’s elected leaders to reject reactionary and unproven crime fighting policies and instead attack the root causes of violence with a comprehensive crime prevention plan.

“Building a Safe Chicago” argues against mandatory minimum prison sentencing schemes and in favor of a comprehensive plan that should include:

- Expansion of community-based programs to improve social conditions that have led to increased demand for illegal weapon possession;
- Reduction in illegal handgun availability by regulating gun shop owners;
- Reduction in gun possession charges by identifying and addressing the causes of the repeat offenses;
- Enactment of the reforms advocated by Mayor Emanuel’s Police Accountability Task Force; and
- Economic development initiatives in high poverty neighborhoods.

“An intelligent and equitable public safety strategy will realign public spending priorities to channel resources into strengthening — not suppressing — citizens most at risk, while paying special attention to reducing opportunity gaps across all public services,” according to the report. “Doing so will create a smarter, healthier, more stable and productive Illinois — and a safer Chicago.”

The full text of “Building a Safe Chicago” is available on the website of the Children and Family Justice Center at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law (<http://www.law.northwestern.edu/legalclinic/cfjc/>).

– more –

Organizations signing on to “Building a Safe Chicago” include the following:

American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois	Illinois Justice Project
Aids Foundation of Chicago	Jewish Council on Urban Affairs
Chicago Alliance against Sexual Exploitation	Juvenile Justice Initiative
Children & Family Justice Center, Bluhm Legal Clinic, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law	Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO)
Communities United	Mikva Challenge Juvenile Justice Council
Community Renewal Society	Mikva Challenge Teen Health Council
Criminal & Juvenile Justice Project, Mandel Legal Aid Clinic, University of Chicago Law School	Mothers Against Senseless Killing
Earthheart	New Moms, Inc.
Enlace Chicago	Planned Parenthood of Illinois
Health & Medicine Policy Research Group	Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation
Illinois African American Coalition for Prevention	Safer Foundation
Illinois Children’s Mental Health Partnership	Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Illinois Consortium on Drug Policy	Strengthening Chicago’s Youth
Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence	United Congress of Community & Religious Organizations
	Voices for Illinois Children

###