

# VIOLENCE PREVENTION

## A Vision of Hope

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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INITIATIVES & RECOMMENDATIONS

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BACKGROUND



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# Preventing Violence ... A Vision of Hope

There is a perception across America that violence is pervasive and becoming more random. Americans are concerned; they feel more vulnerable. They see parents abusing — even killing — their children and the havoc caused by domestic violence. They see kids killing kids, fueled by increasing gang violence and random shootings for seemingly senseless reasons. They question how so many young people could kill so wantonly.

California, mirroring the American phenomenon, is also experiencing an alarming increase in random violence. We are inundated with stories of homicides, drive-by shootings and car jackings. Ours is one of the first states to report that gunshot wounds have become the leading cause of injury death, even surpassing motor vehicle crashes.<sup>1</sup> Increasingly, people are asking why America has become so violent. They are wondering what has gone wrong, and what can be done. Violence is not a new phenomenon in America; its roots are embedded deep in our history, and its threads are woven through the very fabric of our society. But, the current upsurge in violence by and against increasingly younger Americans — too often our children — is a new phenomenon, and a very disturbing one. Some say we are witnessing the emergence of a *culture of violence*.

This culture tolerates violence in our homes and invades our closest relationships. It teaches our children that violence is the way to solve conflict and get what they want. It glorifies violence in our media, our entertainment and our sports. It often makes heroes of those who use violence. Ultimately, it undermines the very ideals and foundations that sustain our democracy.

## **Seeking a Solution**

In May of 1994, California Attorney General Daniel E. Lungren appointed a Policy Council on Violence Prevention and charged the Council with “studying violence in California and recommending policies and strategies for reversing the pervasive culture of violence in our society.” The Council was a diverse, multidisciplinary group representing criminal justice, health, education, business, family violence, parents, youth-serving organizations, media, research, religious and community-action groups, and state agencies.

Council members purposely decided to look at violence from a wide and inclusive viewpoint. The nature of their work, therefore, was deliberately designed to cast a broad net so as to gain a comprehensive perspective on the issue. In keeping with this outlook, the Council adopted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) definition of violence as “the threatened or actual use of force or power against another person, against oneself, or against a group or community that either results in, or has a likelihood of resulting in, injury, death or deprivation.”<sup>2</sup>

To broaden its perspective and information base further, the Council conducted public hearings in five cities across California to receive expert and public testimony on the prevention of violence.

## **The Prevalence and Impact of Violence**

Each day, an average of 65 people in the United States die from interpersonal violence, and more than 6,000 people are physically injured.<sup>3</sup> At these rates of death and injury, more than 215,000 people died, and over 20 million more suffered nonfatal injuries from violence during the decade of the 1980s.<sup>4</sup>

Young people, especially young men, are disproportionately represented among the perpetrators and victims of violence. U. S. arrest rates for homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault are highest among adolescents and young adults.<sup>5</sup> According to the CDC, young people are the only population in the United States whose death rates have increased in the last 20 years, and most of those deaths are due to violent injuries and trauma.<sup>6</sup>

The homicide victimization rate for American males 15 to 24 years of age is eight times higher than those in the next highest country, Italy.<sup>7</sup> During the 1980s, more than 48,000 people were murdered by youths between the ages of 12 and 24.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, national data show that in 1993, an estimated 4 million women were physically assaulted by male partners or cohabitants.<sup>9</sup>

Six out of every 10 women murdered in the United States are killed by someone they know; around 50 percent are killed by a spouse or acquaintance.<sup>10</sup>

Beyond the statistics, the Council members assessed the devastating human, social and economic impacts of violence. They found that, ultimately, violence devalues life and demoralizes our people. It results in illness, injury, disability and death, causing unimaginable anguish for victims and their families. Violence interferes with our ability to cope, frequently leaving permanent emotional scars. It can lead to an increase in mental health and substance abuse problems.

Violence damages families, where women and children are most often victimized. It increases isolation and alienation and breaks down our generational ties. Violence at home teaches our children that this kind of behavior is an acceptable and inescapable part of life, creating a cycle that too often repeats itself in future generations. Violence fosters hate, blame, prejudice and discrimination. It destroys our sense of security and community, producing social confusion and a growing lack of trust in our institutions. Fear of violence causes people to become reactionary and defensive, resulting in an increasingly armed society.

In addition, violence has enormous economic costs. It fuels the exploding costs of our health care, criminal justice, education and social services systems. It diverts scarce resources from education, community development, prevention and early intervention to treatment and incarceration. One estimate places the average annual financial costs of medical and mental health treatment, emergency response, productivity losses and administration of health insurance and disability payments for victims of assault injuries between 1987 and 1990 at \$34 billion. Lost quality of life cost yet another \$145 billion.<sup>11</sup>

### **Contributing Factors to Violence**

The Council next explored the underlying contributing factors to better understand the catalysts that influence criminal and violent behavior. The Council determined that violent behavior is rooted in the multiple contexts of individual, family and community/social conditions that can converge to increase the risk for violence. Moreover, violence feeds on itself; the conditions that breed violence are exacerbated by the effects of violence. The impacts of violent acts become, in themselves, contributing factors to further violence.

The Council considered a myriad of contributing factors. Specifically, media, firearms, alcohol and corporate promotion of violence were identified as catalysts. Poverty, hopelessness and isolation, and educational decline were recognized as social conditions that can sow the seeds of violence. The devaluing of life — including racism, sexism and all forms of discrimination — as well as the decline in personal and social responsibility, were values and attitudes associated with escalating violence. And, mental health problems, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other disorders arising from child abuse, neglect and traumatization, were perceived as significant indicators of a propensity for violence.

Ultimately, however, the Council concluded that aggression is learned behavior; and if learned, “then it can be unlearned, or conditions arranged so it is not learned in the first place.”<sup>12</sup> This underlying, premise led to the development of the Council’s conceptual framework, a framework based in a vision of hope for a violence-free society that develops from an asset- or strength-based view of family and community.

## **A Common Ground for Action**

A search for common ground was the guiding principle in the Council’s deliberations and the development of its proposals for preventing violence. In the course of their discussions, Council members determined the need for a framework to define their parameters and conceptual approach. They also believed it was important to identify effective concrete policies and strategies. They began with a conceptual framework that helped determine the major components of their policy initiatives and recommendations.

### **Conceptual Framework**

First and foremost, the Council agreed that there is hope for preventing violence — a vision of hope for a violence-free California. Council members envision a California that fosters the development of healthy communities, healthy families, and healthy and responsible youth. They propose an approach to achieving this vision that involves:

- Embracing violence-free values.
- Adopting an asset- or strength-based view of family and community.
- Applying effective principles to community-building.
- Focusing on prevention at all levels.

The ultimate value of the Council’s findings lies not so much in the discovery of new information or original response strategies, but rather in this

diverse group's ability to identify a *common ground* conceptual framework and 10 policy initiatives that chart a course to violence prevention. This process, in itself, creates a model for multidisciplinary, bipartisan, cooperative responses to violence in our society.

**Embracing Violence-Free Values.** It was the belief of the Council that the epidemic of violence being experienced by our society is directly linked to a decline in our social values. Furthermore, Council members believe that the creation of a nonviolent society cannot occur in a value-neutral environment. They identified the core values that they believe our society must embrace on its path to nonviolence. These values are fundamentally grounded in the inherent belief that *all people matter*, which fosters a respect for diversity, and in the expectation that everyone must exercise *personal and social responsibility*.

Embracing the belief that all people matter not only fosters a respect for diversity, but it promotes empathy and caring for others, the foundations of community. The exercise of personal responsibility supports the conviction that people are accountable for their behavior and must practice self-control. A sense of social responsibility is requisite for individuals to be able to grow up and become responsible members of their families and communities. Social responsibility includes a commitment to participate in one's community, and a willingness to include all members of the community in the process. Ultimately, our social values must balance the rights and freedoms of the individual with the good of the family and community.

The Council also emphasized that social values must extend beyond the individual; families, organizations, government, businesses and corporations must also value all people, respect diversity, and exercise social responsibility. They must demonstrate integrity and balance their interests and desires for profit with a *concern for the health and welfare* of their communities.

The Council believes these values — acknowledging *that all people matter*, which fosters a *respect for diversity*, and a *sense of personal and social responsibility* — are the underpinnings for the value of nonviolence and for achieving our goal of a violence-free society.

**Adopting an Asset- or Strength-Based View of Family and Community.** The Council recognized that a new view of individual, family and community is emerging in society. It is surfacing from within our communities, among those who educate, protect and serve families, and in the research literature. This view advances the importance of using an asset- or strength-

based model in looking at our people, our families and our communities. It acknowledges the failure of the deficit-based model of the past generation.

In the asset-based model, individuals, families and communities are seen as naturally *resilient*. They are recognized as having the ability to identify and solve their own problems. The role of family, community and government is to nurture the healthy development of individuals, to provide them with opportunities, and to help them develop the self-reliance and self-determination they need to meet and overcome adversity and to contribute to their community. The emphasis is on fostering independence and interdependence, not dependence. The goal is to build up, not tear down — to include, not exclude. Policies and actions that do otherwise, however well intentioned, are recognized as inherently destructive and may foster the conditions for violence.

Under the deficit-based model, government responds to problems after the fact with fragmented strategies that treat the symptoms while ignoring their underlying causes. This approach often has the unintended effect of replacing social institutions with government programs and services. These interventions are not only ineffective, but also undermine the very social institutions they are attempting to emulate.

The shift to an asset-based model has profound implications for government. It redefines the role of government to one of acknowledging and supporting the healthy aspects of families and communities, and to building on and strengthening these whenever possible. Government must guard against undermining the functioning of our communities through inappropriate intrusions into their affairs. Programs and services thrust on communities from above seldom resolve the underlying conditions causing local problems. More often they result in alienation, disenfranchisement and dependence that leads to frustration and mistrust.

Communities must be built from within, with government in a supporting role. Solutions should be locally owned and controlled. Policies and services should be family-focused and community-centered. The emphasis should be on community building and prevention, with intervention targeting those who have lost their way or gotten into trouble.

This new role for government is embodied in movements such as community policing, the public health approach to violence prevention, and integrated school-based service delivery models. Community policing, for example, has been defined by the California Attorney General's Office as "a philosophy, management style and organizational strategy that promotes pro-

active problem-solving and police-community partnerships to address the underlying causes of crime and fear as well as other community issues.”<sup>13</sup>

**Applying Effective Principles to Community-Building.** The emergence of an asset-based model creates a new paradigm of community service. Those with vision have come to recognize that the long-term health of our society depends on a new approach to community-building, one with an increased emphasis on prevention, community involvement and collaboration.

The Council has identified key guiding principles as the basis for this community-building approach. To be effective, policies and strategies must:

- Strengthen individuals, families and communities.
- Support locally owned and locally controlled efforts.
- Deliver family-focused, community-centered services.
- Emphasize primary prevention, but work at all levels of prevention.
- Entail comprehensive, integrated plans that affect individual values and behaviors, address the agents of violence, and change the physical and social environment.
- Encourage collaboration and integration of resources.
- Target resources effectively by measuring outcome-based results to promote community health.

**Focusing on Prevention at All Levels.** Recognizing that multiple levels of prevention and intervention are critical to a comprehensive effort, the Council adapted the public health field’s *primary, secondary and tertiary* levels of prevention to violence prevention:

- *Primary prevention* fosters and maintains healthy individuals, families and communities.
- *Secondary prevention* addresses the attitudes, behaviors, conditions and environments that place individuals, families and communities at risk of violence or expose them to violence.
- *Tertiary prevention* targets violent populations and their victims through the use of treatment or deterrent to reduce or prevent the risk of continued violence.

# Ten Major Initiatives for Preventing Violence

Within the conceptual framework described above, and reflecting its broad, inclusive approach, the Policy Council developed 10 major common ground initiatives for multidisciplinary, communitywide responses to violence. The Council concluded that to achieve a violence-free society, government and communities must promote policies and strategies that:

- Increase the constructive use of the media to deglamorize violence and promote non-violent social norms.
- Reduce deaths and injuries from firearms.
- Reduce violence associated with alcohol.
- Strengthen communities and schools by expanding local ownership and control.
- Support families, recognizing them as the basic institution for developing and nurturing children.
- Foster and support violence-free relationships.
- Ensure the development of healthy and responsible youth.
- Recognize that all people matter, fostering a respect for diversity.
- Advance personal and social responsibility.
- Support violence prevention research and evaluation based on the public health model.

**Recommendations for Action.** These 10 common ground initiatives map a comprehensive approach to violence prevention that addresses key influences on violence, strengthens families and communities, instills a respect for all people and a sense of personal and social responsibility, and supports research into effective strategies for preventing violence.

Each initiative is supported with specific recommendations for action that reflect the Council's emphasis on prevention, community involvement and collaboration. The recommendations are not meant to be an exhaustive analysis of each issue, but rather illustrative of the kinds of policies and strategies necessary to reverse the tide of violence sweeping across our nation.

For example, in the ***Media/Firearms/Alcohol Initiatives***, the Council recognized that recommendations which involve constitutional rights would be complex, controversial and politically sensitive. Nevertheless, Council members agreed that the strong connection between media, firearms, alcohol and violence had to be addressed. The Council made a number of rec-

ommendations, including calling upon entertainment and news media to exercise corporate responsibility to limit the amount of violence portrayed and the tendency to glamorize violent behavior. Firearms recommendations included prohibiting the manufacture and sale of “Saturday Night Specials” and implementing firearms consumer safety regulations. The Council also encouraged local jurisdictions to control how alcohol is distributed and sold in their communities and recommended increasing educational and prevention programs designed to reduce alcohol use by youth. On a few significant issues, such as state pre-emption of firearms laws and local taxation of alcohol, the Council was unable to reach consensus, but agreed that it was important to include its discussions and varying points of view within this report.

In the **Community Initiative**, the Council unanimously recommended the adoption of asset-based, community-centered approaches such as community-oriented policing, community-based government and public health prevention models. These models all involve a customer service orientation and inclusive methods of identifying problems and implementing solutions.

The Council determined there is no “quick fix” to rebuilding the family institution or addressing the problems of family violence. **Family Initiative** recommendations were made that would strengthen families by providing early, comprehensive and integrated services and support programs to counter the negative effects of multiple-risk factors, including poverty, alcohol or drug abuse, physical and mental health disorders, and family and neighborhood violence. In addition, the Council recommended that relationship skills (e.g., parenting, communication, conflict and anger management) be made accessible and available to adults and youth through traditional and non-traditional delivery systems.

The Council was determined to address the detrimental effects of domestic violence on individuals and families, as well as counter the existing social tendency to *look the other way and not get involved*. In the **Relationships Initiative**, Council members strongly recommended that society adopt the belief that “there is no excuse for domestic violence,” and that everyone has a responsibility to help prevent domestic violence. They also recommended that this concept be promoted through comprehensive educational campaigns involving the media, government, schools, religious organizations, medical providers and other community groups.

The Council recognized that the factors which perpetuate youth violence are complex and require comprehensive and thoughtful solutions. The Council’s primary recommendations in the **Youth Initiative** make prevention

and early intervention a top priority. Members advocated involving youth in leadership, decision-making and problem-solving. The Council also recommended that communities coordinate their resources to provide adequate after-school activities, employment training and opportunities, and positive role models and mentors for youth. Finally, the Council recommended that schools, communities and juvenile justice agencies create “a continuum of swift, meaningful interventions to respond to misconduct by juveniles at all levels of severity.”

The Council determined that there is a definite need for refocusing on social values that promote nonviolence. In the ***Respect for Diversity and Responsibility Initiatives***, Council members recommended that social values such as respect for all people, acceptance of and respect for diversity, and personal and social responsibility be instilled by modeling and teaching empathy, compassion, integrity, multicultural and human relations, civic duty, community service and the need to balance personal gain with community welfare in every possible context. They not only called for school curriculum to integrate these values, but also for government and corporate America, including the media, to practice and promote these values, setting a good example for our youth.

Finally, in the ***Research Initiative***, the Council recognized the need to direct our limited resources to policies and strategies that are outcome-based and effective. In addition, the Council acknowledged that many of the policy questions with which we continue to struggle are a direct result of an earlier absence of evaluation efforts. Identifying the problem and contributing factors, as well as the most effective prevention and intervention efforts, requires the application of the scientific approach to community problem-solving embodied in the public health model. From this scientific perspective, there must be: 1) a systematic analysis of all available data to accurately understand and define the problems; 2) development of strategies to effectively prevent or intervene in the problem; and 3) implementation of evaluation processes that mirror the recommended interventions and result in useful feedback information. The Council recommended that state and local leaders collaboratively incorporate this approach to determine and adopt those policies and programs which will effectively prevent violence before it occurs.

## **A Violence-Free Society**

The Policy Council concluded that violence is everyone’s business. When the people of California accept this truth, we will see a promising future, and

we will start to turn back the tide of violence sweeping our land. The Council believes that a country which reaffirms that every person matters by embracing violence-free values, sees its people and communities as having strengths and being resilient, and fosters those strengths and resiliencies will see the promise fulfilled. California can lead the way.

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#### ENDNOTES

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# INITIATIVES

## **MEDIA**

Promote policies and strategies that increase the constructive use of media to deglamorize violence and promote nonviolent social norms.

## **FIREARMS**

Promote policies and strategies that reduce deaths and injuries from firearms.

## **ALCOHOL**

Promote policies and strategies that reduce violence associated with alcohol.

## **COMMUNITY**

Promote policies and strategies that strengthen communities and schools by expanding local ownership and control.

## **FAMILY**

Promote policies and strategies that support families, recognizing them as the basic institution for developing and nurturing children.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

Promote policies and strategies that foster and support violence-free relationships.

## **YOUTH**

Promote policies and strategies that ensure the development of healthy and responsible youth.

## **RESPECT for DIVERSITY**

Promote policies and strategies that recognize that all people matter, fostering a respect for diversity.

## **PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Promote policies and strategies that advance personal and social responsibility.

## **RESEARCH & EVALUATION**

Promote policies and strategies to support violence prevention research and evaluation based on the public health model.

## **MEDIA**

### **Promote policies and strategies that increase the constructive use of media to deglamorize violence and promote nonviolent social norms.**

1. Network executives and local television and radio stations should adopt more responsible, sensitive news reporting practices that:
  - Deglamorize violence and promote nonviolent social norms.
  - Avoid showing graphic details of murder scenes and resist the attraction to sensationalize violence.
  - Balance negative images with those that highlight positive efforts in communities such as neighborhood heroes, including youth and young men of color.
  - Help promote community forums that encourage participation in violence-prevention efforts.
2. The motion picture, music, video, television and interactive game industries should exercise corporate responsibility by producing products and programming that:
  - Deglamorize violence.
  - Accurately portray the consequences of violence in terms of human suffering and social costs.
  - Encourage empathy and personal and social responsibility.
  - Teach conflict resolution skills and nonviolence (e.g., resolving conflict without weapons or violent behavior).
  - Do not stereotype or promote social misconceptions about cultures, religions, genders or age groups.
  - Provide positive, nonviolent entertainment options *for children and adults*.
3. Advertising and marketing campaigns should:
  - Promote products without depicting or glamorizing violence.
  - Avoid promoting anti-social behavior such as that connected with graffiti and gangs.
  - Show sensitivity to all segments of society and avoid demeaning depictions of any group, including women.
4. The motion picture, music, video, television and interactive game industries should exercise corporate responsibility by developing effective rating systems and consumer guides that reveal the levels of violence in their products, in addition to adult language, nudity and sex.
5. Distributors and exhibitors of entertainment products, including theaters, video and record stores, and stores that sell video games should:

- Advocate for rating systems that accurately reflect public concerns and scientific information about the effects of violent and other inappropriate material on children.
  - Seriously promote and enforce rating advisories and other content information to assist parents and ensure that children have access only to age-appropriate material.
6. Parents should increase their media literacy to better understand and mitigate the possible influences of media on their children's attitudes and behavior.
  7. Schools should incorporate media literacy programs into the existing curriculum to enable youth to better access, analyze, evaluate and produce communication in a variety of forms.
  8. The Attorney General's Office, in conjunction with the State Departments of Health and Social Services, should develop a statewide campaign to communicate the message that violence is everybody's business and should not be tolerated.
  9. Public education campaigns should be developed to instill the social values of:
    - Acceptance and respect for all people, recognizing the value of diversity in gender, age, race, culture and religion, and countering stereotypes and social misconceptions.
    - Personal responsibility and accountability as demonstrated through character, critical thinking skills, resiliency, delayed gratification and related issues.
    - Social responsibility, including the importance of civic virtue, community service, justice and fairness, and the necessity to balance freedom with responsibility.

## **FIREARMS**

### **Promote policies and strategies that reduce deaths and injuries from firearms.**

1. California should enact legislation to prohibit the manufacture and sale of handguns commonly referred to as "Saturday Night Specials."
2. California should enact legislation to require guns manufactured in California to meet the same consumer safety and production standards imposed on imported firearms.
3. California should enact legislation that requires gun manufacturers to build in or provide child safety devices for all firearms sold in this state and requires all dealers to offer such devices at the point of sale.

4. The California Attorney General, Governor and Legislature should urge Congress to support the continuation and rigorous enforcement of the federal assault weapons ban.
5. California should enact legislation to limit the sale of expanding, hollow-point ammunition because of its lethality and ability to cause extensive injury and organ damage.
6. California should enact legislation to require all gun dealers to register with their local police or sheriff's department to ensure that proper dealer licensing requirements have been met.
7. California should enact legislation to require individuals to obtain a license to purchase a handgun.
8. The Department of Justice should promote public awareness of California law requiring that all firearm sales and transfers be documented through a licensed dealer or local law enforcement agency.
9. The California Department of Justice, the California Department of Health Services and local law enforcement agencies should develop a public service campaign to promote firearms safety and to encourage gun owners to record the make, model and serial number of their firearms for reporting purposes, if stolen.
10. The Judicial Council should encourage judges to apply the law allowing them to order individuals who are subject to domestic violence restraining orders to surrender any and all firearms in their possession.
11. California should enact legislation to increase the penalty for carrying loaded, concealed firearms from a misdemeanor to a misdemeanor/felony at the discretion of the district attorney, to make it consistent with other concealed weapon sanctions.
12. California should enact legislation to increase mandatory sentences for using a gun during a crime.

## **ALCOHOL**

### **Promote policies and strategies that reduce violence associated with alcohol.**

1. Local governments and communities should exercise their rights to influence how alcohol is distributed and sold in their communities.
2. California should enact legislation to increase state alcoholic beverage excise taxes and allocate the additional resources to fund prevention programs, alcohol-related trauma care and treatment, and economic development programs that reduce community economic dependence upon alcohol outlets.

3. The State Department of Health Services and the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs should initiate a public awareness campaign to educate the public on the strong association between alcohol and violence.
4. California should increase state funding for and support the continuation of federal funding or effective local alcohol, drug and violence prevention and intervention programs.
5. California should continue to make it a high priority to fund Department of Alcohol and Drug Program perinatal substance abuse programs for pregnant women and their substance-exposed children.

## **COMMUNITY**

### **Promote policies and strategies that strengthen communities and schools by expanding local ownership and control.**

1. The Attorney General's Office, the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, and statewide law enforcement professional associations should aggressively promote comprehensive Community Policing so that it becomes the standard for policing throughout California.
2. Local city, county and district governments should be encouraged to adopt a "community-based, customer service" approach that actively seeks community participation in identifying problems and designing and implementing solutions.
3. Local programs and agencies should be encouraged to recruit and fill staff and leadership positions from the neighborhoods and communities being served.
4. Local communities should exercise their authority in managing and controlling alcohol distribution through the effective use of local zoning ordinances, conditional use permits and Department of Alcohol Beverage Control enforcement practices regulating retail outlet licenses, advertising and billboards.
5. State funding should be allocated through non-categorical block grants that require community collaboration to support community capacity-building involving violence prevention.
6. State and local policy-makers should be encouraged to offer social and economic incentives for businesses to invest in community health, including affordable housing, vocational skill development, jobs and child care.
7. Schools, park and recreation departments, businesses and youth-serving

- organizations should coordinate their resources to expand after-school activities and alternatives for youth.
8. Schools, police, probation, juvenile courts and youth-serving organizations should work with communities to collaboratively develop community service programs that serve as meaningful interventions for youth who have committed school infractions or minor offenses.
  9. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction and County and School District Superintendents should provide leadership and incentives for schools to recognize their place in the community, encouraging them to remain open and accessible to community input and shared decision-making.
  10. School districts should offer their school sites to community-based organizations and other agencies to use for the integrated, coordinated delivery of health and social services to children and their families.
  11. Schools should actively encourage parents, businesses, police and other community members to become involved through volunteer time and services.
  12. Schools should teach responsible civic participation, implement policies that support community service learning, and include community service as a requirement for all extra curricular activities.
  13. Local school districts should coordinate with the business community to expand vocational and educational programs that include internships and job skill development.
  14. County offices of education and local school districts should ensure that community or alternative schools provide quality educational programs for students suspended or expelled from regular school.
  15. County offices of education should be required to certify that every school within the county has developed and implemented a school safety plan that involves broad community participation.
  16. Parents, businesses and other community members should become involved in their local schools through volunteer time and services.
  17. Public and private employers should be encouraged to provide employees with incentives for participation in community service efforts such as mentoring programs, school involvement, tutoring and neighborhood improvement projects.

## **FAMILY**

### **Promote policies and strategies that support families, recognizing them as the basic institution for developing and nurturing children.**

1. Early intervention and support programs should be expanded to reach all children and parents exposed to risk factors.
2. Health and social service agencies should establish or expand existing home visitation programs for new parents who require support and assistance.
3. State and local policy-makers and the Legislature should identify policies and programs that have the unintended consequence of undermining families and modify them to support committed, caring and responsible family relationships.
4. Local schools, adult education programs, community organizations and businesses should make relationship-skills training, including child development, parenting and conflict and anger management skills, available and accessible for men and women through traditional and non-traditional delivery systems.
5. Schools should incorporate child-development and parenting skills into the existing educational curriculum for all grades K-12.
6. Schools, social services, parks and recreation departments, youth-serving organizations and businesses should coordinate their resources to ensure the availability of adequate quality child care.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Promote policies and strategies that support violence-free relationships.**

1. State and local government, businesses, entertainment and advertising industries, police, social service and health agencies should develop and support comprehensive campaigns that communicate the messages that "there is no excuse for domestic violence" and that "domestic violence is everybody's business."
2. Local religious and service organizations, non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations and other community groups, and medical providers should embrace the message that "there is no excuse for domestic violence," and that everyone has a responsibility to prevent domestic violence.
3. State and local public health officials and domestic violence service providers should establish partnerships to develop and implement a broad range of prevention activities in communities throughout the state.

4. Schools should integrate curriculum regarding nonviolent relationships, dating and domestic violence, and related subjects into the existing K-12 course of study.
5. Schools and youth-serving organizations should expand programs that build independence, self-esteem and leadership skills among young women and girls.
6. Schools and youth-serving organizations should expand programs that teach boys and men how to develop and maintain nurturing, nonviolent relationships.
7. Local schools and libraries, adult education programs, businesses and community organizations should make relationship-skills training, including teen dating, conflict and anger management and parenting, available and accessible for males and females through traditional and non-traditional delivery systems.
8. All health care practitioners and social service workers should receive appropriate continuing education to improve their knowledge and skills in universal screening, identification, assessment, intervention and prevention of domestic violence.
9. Local law enforcement and victim service agencies should be encouraged to develop and implement special investigative units and response teams to respond to all domestic violence calls.
10. California should enact legislation requiring continuing education for police, judges and court personnel regarding the seriousness of domestic violence, sensitivity to its victims, and effective interventions.
11. The Attorney General should encourage local law enforcement and prosecution agencies to increase their efforts to vigorously enforce and vertically prosecute domestic violence cases using standardized criminal investigative procedures.
12. The Judicial Council should encourage judges to apply the law allowing them to order individuals who are subject to domestic violence restraining orders to surrender any and all firearms in their possession.
13. State funding for domestic violence and victim service programs should be increased to provide counseling to children who witness domestic violence and other violent incidents.
14. State and local agencies should work with domestic violence programs to increase, develop and coordinate emergency and longer-term transitional services for women leaving abusive relationships.
15. Domestic violence programs and local service agencies should make

their services available, accessible and culturally sensitive to multicultural and non-English speaking victims.

- 16.State and local agencies should improve the collection, analysis and sharing of data on domestic violence across all jurisdictions.
- 17.Convicted domestic violence batterers should be liable for costs of domestic violence shelters and other medical and counseling services rendered to domestic violence victims.

## **YOUTH**

### **Promote policies and strategies that ensure the development of healthy and responsible youth.**

1. California should make prevention and early intervention a top priority through financing and promoting strategies that support positive youth development and resiliency.
2. State and local leaders should involve youth in leadership, decision-making and problem-solving capacities.
3. State funding should be increased to support effective local prevention and intervention programs to reduce alcohol and other drug use among youth.
4. Schools, park and recreation departments, businesses and youth-serving organizations should coordinate their resources to expand after-school activities and alternatives for youth.
5. Schools, youth-serving organizations and businesses should coordinate their resources to provide and expand employment training and opportunities for youth.
6. Schools, youth-serving organizations and businesses should coordinate their resources to expose youth to positive role models through mentoring or buddy programs such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters.
7. Schools should integrate multicultural and human relations issues into the curriculum within the existing K-12 course of study.
8. Schools should incorporate relationship skills training, including conflict resolution, anger management and dating etiquette, into the existing curriculum.
9. Schools, juvenile justice agencies and youth-serving organizations should develop and expand empathy-building programs such as those that link youth with the elderly, young children or physically challenged youth.
- 10.Schools and youth-serving organizations should expand programs that

- build independence, self-esteem and leadership skills among young women and girls.
11. Schools and youth-serving organizations should expand programs that teach boys and men how to develop and maintain nurturing, nonviolent relationships.
  12. Youth-serving professionals should be trained in the early risk factors associated with violent behavior, as well as in appropriate interventions and referrals.
  13. Funding agencies should provide mandatory training for youth-serving agency personnel in the early risk factors associated with violent behavior, as well as effective interventions and treatment strategies.
  14. Schools, parents, police, probation and district attorneys should expand coordinated, effective truancy enforcement and abatement efforts.
  15. Schools, police, probation, juvenile courts and youth-serving organizations should be encouraged to collaboratively create a continuum of swift, meaningful interventions to respond to misconduct by juveniles at all levels of severity.
  16. County probation departments should be encouraged to adopt intensive first-time and early intervention models that address young minors with multiple problem profiles.
  17. Juvenile justice agencies should be encouraged to expand “victim-offender” programs for youthful offenders and at-risk youth to build their empathy for victims by exposing the youth to the impact of their actions.
  18. State parole and county probation and social services agencies should be encouraged to develop comprehensive re-entry programs to help wards integrate successfully back into the community.

## **RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY**

**Promote policies and strategies that recognize that all people matter, fostering a respect for diversity.**

1. An inherent respect for life that recognizes that all people matter should be instilled by modeling and teaching empathy, compassion and caring for others.
2. Acceptance and respect for all people should be instilled by modeling and teaching the value of diversity in gender, age, race and culture, and by countering stereotypes and cultural misconceptions in every possible context.
3. All public serving agencies should provide ongoing, multicultural

competency training for their personnel to ensure they treat all individuals with respect and cultural sensitivity.

4. Public administrators should establish personnel practices to recruit and train personnel who reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the communities they serve.

## **PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

### **Promote policies and strategies that advance personal and social responsibility.**

1. Personal responsibility and accountability should be instilled by modeling and teaching honesty, integrity, character, critical thinking, resiliency, self-control, delayed gratification and related issues to children in every possible context.
2. Social responsibility should be instilled by teaching and modeling the importance of civic duty, community service, justice, fairness and the necessity to balance personal gain with community welfare.
3. The private sector should exercise corporate responsibility in product development, advertising and marketing to ensure they do not glamorize or promote violence.
4. State and local policy-makers should offer social and economic incentives for businesses to invest in community health, including affordable housing, vocational skill development, jobs and child care.
5. Public and private employers should provide employees incentives for participation in community service efforts, including mentoring programs, school involvement, tutoring and neighborhood improvement projects.
6. Schools should teach responsible civic participation, implement policies that support community service learning, and include community service as a requirement of all extra curricular activities.
7. Schools, police, probation, juvenile courts and youth-serving organizations should work with communities to collaboratively develop community service programs that can serve as meaningful interventions for youth who have committed school infractions and minor offenses.

## **RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**

### **Promote policies and strategies to support violence prevention research and evaluation based on the public health model.**

1. State and local leaders should create partnerships with communities, a variety of public and private agencies, and universities to incorporate the public health approach into their violence prevention efforts.
2. California should place high priorities on utilizing, modifying, expanding and increasing compatibility of relevant information systems to provide the following:
  - Counts and descriptions of violent events that are receiving considerable public attention, but are poorly counted by existing measurement systems. These include, but are not limited to, family violence, personal victimizations in commercial and organizational robberies, violent bias crimes, and violent events in schools.
  - More comprehensive recording of sexual violence, including incidents involving intimates, incidents of homicide and wounding in which the sexual component may be masked, and more complete descriptions of recorded events.
  - Information on the treatment of violence victims in emergency departments, hospitals and long-term care facilities; links to data on precipitating violent events; links between public health and criminal justice data; and development of these data as a major measurement system.
  - Information on long- and short-term psychological and financial consequences of violent victimization and links to data on violent events.
  - Measurements of violence patterns and trends for small geographic and jurisdictional areas, as baselines for measuring preventive intervention effects.
  - Information system modifications to record more detailed attributes of violent events and their participants, in order to facilitate more precise studies of risk factors for violence and evaluations of preventive interventions to reduce it.
3. Public and private agencies and organizations should coordinate and invest in collaborative research to determine what policies and programs will effectively prevent violence before it occurs. All violence prevention

efforts should include an impact-evaluation component, a cost-effectiveness component and a “learn-as-we-go” approach that allows for altering the course of action based on evaluation data.

4. Affected communities should be involved in identifying the issues and underlying causes of violence, and in determining the most effective responses and interventions. Violence efforts should include an extensive outreach and educational component and must be evaluated to assess impact and cost-benefit.
5. A Clearinghouse should be established to coordinate sharing and dissemination of violence prevention information, data and resource materials, including descriptions of rigorously evaluated violence prevention efforts provided by public and private funding agencies to demonstrate what works at the local level.
6. California institutions of higher learning should develop and implement programs to train researchers in violence prevention and research.
7. Federal, state and local agencies, both public and private, should redirect funds and resources to the most successful, cost-effective prevention and intervention efforts.

In May of 1994, California Attorney General Daniel E. Lungren convened a 26-member Policy Council on Violence Prevention and charged the Council with “studying violence in California and recommending policies and strategies for reversing the pervasive culture of violence in our society.” The Council’s membership included several state department directors, a district attorney, police chiefs and other criminal justice representatives, a county superintendent of schools, community action program directors, family violence experts, members of the medical, education and youth-serving professions, a researcher, business leaders, a religious leader, a media specialist, a foundation director and Californians directly affected by violence.

## **THE ATTORNEY GENERAL’S CHARGE**

Specifically, the Attorney General charged the Policy Council with:

- Examining the underlying causes and social impact of violence on California communities.
- Finding common ground for multidisciplinary and communitywide responses to violence.
- Making recommendations for preventing or reducing violence in California.

As a group, the Policy Council was purposely chosen for its diversity of professional and ethnic backgrounds, knowledge, and social and political viewpoints. Its members represented a microcosm of society, bringing together their collective experience and expertise, as well as their unique perspectives, to address the problem of violence and violence prevention.

The Council was asked to develop recommendations that would involve partnerships between public health, the police, education, social services, religious and community action groups, and local businesses. Acknowledging that there is no one solution to the problem of violence, the Council was asked to approach its work by seeking common ground for preventing violence in California.

## **Defining the Parameters**

In responding to the Attorney General's charge, the Council opted for a broad, comprehensive investigation of the overall subject of violence, rather than an in-depth look at only one or two issues connected with this enormous problem. The Council's mission entailed relevant fact-finding and thoughtful deliberation, as opposed to concentrated research and long-term study. Recognizing that they could not cover every aspect of each issue, Council members decided to speak to the community, in addition to the technical experts, and to offer their perceptions of the problem and an approach to preventing violence at the community level.

The Council's specific recommendations are based on the common-ground philosophy adopted by its members, the consensus of what these 26 individuals — as a group, and in this time and place — believe should be done about violence in California. The discussion that follows each recommendation includes examples and suggestions for implementation as a starting place for further public discussion and action.

## **Development of a Process**

The Policy Council met for an initial two-day orientation session. The purpose of the meeting was to hear the Attorney General's charge to the Council and to agree on a process for meeting this charge.

In addition to the procedural discussions, this first session included formal presentations on two approaches to violence prevention. Chief Galvin of the Vallejo Police Department outlined the philosophy, structure and success of Community Oriented Policing.

Larry Cohen, Office of Prevention, Contra Costa County Department of Public Health discussed the public health approach to violence prevention.

The two-day session ended with a decision by the Council to conduct a series of five public hearings across the state, to be followed by Council deliberations. Hearing and deliberation dates were set to maximize participation by Council members, and hearings sites were selected.

The Council wanted to hear testimony on the causes and factors that contribute to violence, the impact of violence on the lives of Californians, and innovative approaches to preventing violence. The Council selected subjects for testimony, and members suggested specific people to address these topics. The Council also requested written testimony from selected individuals, agencies and groups.

## Hearings and Deliberations

The Council traveled to five California cities to hear testimony from academic and community leaders, business people, professionals and actual victims of violence, some of whom were actively working to mitigate the impact of violence. The hearings took place in Oakland, Los Angeles, Fresno, San Diego and Sacramento.

The Council heard testimony from approximately 100 individuals. Each person who testified was also asked to submit written testimony.

Following the hearings, the Council conducted deliberations over a three-month period. During these sessions, Council members reviewed the content of the hearings, shared professional experiences and theoretical perspectives, discussed and created a conceptual framework for the report, and searched for common ground recommendations for their response to the Attorney General.

## Framing the Report

The Council agreed that while the Attorney General had officially requested this report, in order for it to be most effective, its audience would need to be much broader. The Council also recognized that violence is pervasive in our society, and that it has multiple and complex causal factors. Having acknowledged this, it became clear that any effective response would have to be comprehensive and multidisciplinary, involving partnerships at every level of society: individual, family, community and government.

Given the complexity of the problem, the Council began by developing a conceptual framework for preventing violence. This framework included:

- An overall vision for healthy families, nonviolent relationships, responsible and caring youth and healthy communities.
- Underlying social values for nonviolence, including a respect for all people as well as personal and social responsibility.
- An *asset-based* approach to violence prevention that builds upon the strengths of families and communities, rather than attempting to replace these social institutions with government services.
- A set of guiding principles for preventing violence that are consistent with the vision, values and asset-based approach.

The report proposes ten initiatives for preventing violence, each with a number of specific recommendations to illustrate its application. Three initiatives address social influences that the Council determined significantly con-

tribute to violence: media, firearms and alcohol. The next three initiatives discuss family, relationships and youth. The seventh initiative discusses community and the role of local government, schools, public and nonprofit human services, private enterprise, and individual community members in violence prevention. The eighth and ninth initiatives speak to the need to advance the social values of respect for all people, and personal and social responsibility. The tenth and final initiative focuses on the importance of research and evaluation to advancing effective prevention efforts.

The Policy Council's recommendations reach out to all levels of society for solutions to violence. The role of government in this process, while still significant, is one of *assisting* rather than directing. The Council's approach is family-focused and community-driven. It emphasizes primary prevention and early intervention.

Violence in America did not appear overnight, nor will it disappear without a concerted effort from every level of society to address this problem. Reversing violence must begin with defining violence, examining its prevalence in society, and understanding its social impacts, as well as its underlying causes. These efforts must be vision-centered, focusing on an America that embraces violence-free values and provides governmental support for the healthy development of individuals, relationships, families and communities in all walks of social and economic life.

# ***VIOLENCE PREVENTION - A VISION OF HOPE***

## **The Final Report of the Attorney General's Policy Council on Violence Prevention**

A Policy Council was appointed by Attorney General Daniel E. Lungren in April 1994 to "study violence in California and recommend policies and strategies for reversing the pervasive culture of violence in our society." The Council included representatives from criminal justice, health, education, business, family violence prevention, parents, youth-serving organizations, media, research, community-action groups, and state agencies.

Based on testimony from five statewide hearings and lengthy deliberations, the Council has produced a 275 page report, ***Violence Prevention, A Vision of Hope***. This report includes the Council's conceptual framework for preventing violence and ten initiatives which address more specific issues, such as media, firearms, alcohol, community, family, relationships, youth, values, and research & evaluation. Each initiative has numerous recommendations that illustrate how it could be implemented.

## **New Videotape on Violence Prevention**

The Attorney General's Crime and Violence Prevention Center produced a new 15 minute video, ***Preventing Violence... A Vision of Hope***, which examines our culture of violence and looks at ways we can reverse its rising tide to create safe and healthy communities. It delivers a powerful message of hope and courage. Even more, this video is a call to action — a call for everyone to work together to reduce the violence that permeates our society. Discover how prevention efforts offer a promise for violence-free neighborhoods. Hear what the experts have learned. Listen to the determined people who are making this happen!

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