

strategies that will advance our mission to support communities and those who are the most vulnerable.

The Older Americans Act is a shining example of a Federal policy that works. Every \$1 invested into the Older Americans Act generates \$3 by helping seniors stay at home through low-cost, community-based services. I thank the dozens of stakeholders we have worked with over the past several months to reauthorize and strengthen OAA, including the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations, AARP, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, the National Alliance for Caregiving, Meals on Wheels America, the National Association of Counties, and the Alzheimer's Association. I ask unanimous consent to have these letters of support printed in the RECORD at the end of my remarks.

I urge my colleagues in the House to support this important reauthorization so that we can swiftly send it to the President's desk to get signed into law.

#### GAME CHANGERS STUDY

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I recently had the honor of being welcomed by Game Changers, an organization based in Louisville, KY, devoted to guiding our youth toward productive and meaningful lives, for a panel discussion on the impact of violence in our community. The executive director of Game Changers is Christopher 2X, who I have known for many years and watched change the lives of so many Kentuckians through his advocacy, leadership, and community building efforts. In December of 2019, just a few months ago, Christopher showed me the findings of Game Changers's study on the impact of youth violence recently released by his organization. Subsequently, I asked him to organize an event in West Louisville with a panel of community leaders and parents to discuss the report and how violent crime affects the lives of Louisville youth.

At the event, we not only discussed the findings, but also heard from Louisvillians whose real-life stories are contained in the pages of those reports. Kentucky Education Commissioner, Dr. Wayne D. Lewis, educated us on the burden that violence has on children. However, the only way to grasp the true tragedy of violent crime is to hear from those impacted. I met with Deshante Edwards, who not only lost her son, Donte, but now sees her 6-year-old grandson subsequently lose focus in school. I listened as Krista and Navynn told me that, as a result of the murder of their son, Christian, their 17- and 11-year old children are too petrified to go outside. Only personal stories such as these truly demonstrate the extreme toll taken on children exposed to violence.

That is why I feel compelled to share Game Changers's findings on violence and its impact on our youth with my colleagues. Tragically, children are ex-

posed to violence in every corner of our Nation. I ask unanimous consent that this report be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD with the hope that every Member of Congress will read it and work with me to create safer communities for our children.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

VIOLENCE IMPACT ON CHILDREN LEARNING  
The Christopher 2X Game Changers Target Education—Crush Violence  
SHINING A LIGHT ON HOW GUN VIOLENCE IMPACTS KIDS

*Kentucky Education Commissioner Dr. Wayne D. Lewis*

"Children who grow up in violent neighborhoods seldom realize their way of life is not typical. Their lives may include regularly hearing gunshots through the night and sometimes during the day, losing friends, family, and neighbors to gun violence, and continually being fearful of becoming the victim of violent crime.

No parent wants that kind of life for their children, but that is what life looks like for children living in violent neighborhoods across the U.S., including children in some Louisville neighborhoods. The trauma they suffer is unlike anything children growing up in upper middle class or affluent neighborhoods could imagine. And the impact of that trauma, while often unrecognized, is significant; often impacting their ability to reach their learning potential at school.

Recognizing and responding to the trauma of students who experience violence has to be part of how we educate them. There is no way to reasonably expect students who have experienced such trauma to leave their fears, anxieties, and pain at home when they come to school. Instead, it is incumbent upon schools to help connect students with community resources as appropriate, and to do our absolute best to be sensitive to and accommodate students' social and emotional needs as we work to meet their academic needs in schools."

*Jenny Benner, Senior Director-Child Development Center, Chestnut Street Family YMCA*

"As an early childhood educator, it has become more common to see children who have been affected in some way by violence. Many of the children we serve are too young to verbalize their trauma or stress. Because of this, we have to ensure early childhood educators have the training and support needed to help these children build resilience. We focus heavily on a child's social-emotional development and the first step is to make sure they feel safe and loved.

Once in a safe environment, they will open up to learn skills necessary to be successful in school and life. It is also important to teach problem-solving and how to resolve conflicts appropriately, using words. I believe this skill is lacking in some children and they are most likely to continue cycles of violence because that is all they know. This report shines a light on how important education is, even as early as infancy, and my hope is that this will start a dialogue about how we as a community can come together to serve children to our best ability!"

*Jefferson Family Court Judge Derwin Webb*

"When I was 15 years old, one of my good friends was accidentally shot and killed by a friend. A few years later, that same shooter was accidentally shot and killed by someone else. Today, we have kids killing kids—at random times—intentionally. Louisville, we are better than this. Guns have no names, bullets have no names, but our children do.

So, I am asking you to please, please stop the violence. I started YOUNG Men's Academy at Whitney Young Elementary, a mentorship program, to try to help, and I applaud this report and all efforts to bring attention to the needs of kids exposed to violence, and to help them reach their potential."

*Dr. J. David Richardson, Chief of Surgery, University of Louisville Hospital*

"Having been involved in the care of the injured for over 40 years, I applaud the current focus on the downstream effects of gun violence in our community. As trauma surgeons, our team focuses on the "victim" or injured. We analyze their care and outcomes through our quality review process, but we have few, if any, mechanisms for examining the effects on families, neighbors, or others in the community who are impacted by this violence. I have been particularly concerned about the children who bear witness to these acts, even if they are not directly or physically injured. How can a growing, evolving, learning, adapting brain develop as we would desire in an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear? I have heard countless stories of the deleterious effects of these acts of violence and their negative impact on the culture and well-being of our neighborhoods. While it is cliché to state "our children are our future", it is nonetheless true. The children who are exposed to gun violence in Louisville deserve better."

*Troy Pitcock, retired LMPD Major 2nd Division*

"Gun violence has a horrifying impact on our youth. Witnessing it directly or the remnants of violence at police crime scenes are situations too many of our youth are exposed to, many times at such early ages. These situations have life lasting implications on children, at times creating a perception such violence is acceptable. A lack of parental support can enhance the belief to our youth that such actions are acceptable or even the proper method to deal with conflict."

#### CHRISTOPHER 2X

Imagine you're a mom at home watching a video with your kids and their playmates on a Saturday afternoon when all a sudden your home is being riddled with bullets from a high-caliber weapon.

Bullets through the walls, furniture, shattering the oven door, while you scramble to get the little ones on the floor, covered with your body, and under a bed, to keep them safe.

No imagination is needed. This happened to my daughter Heaven, a child development specialist, who was with six children, ages 1-7, when her home was hit with gunfire from an AK-47 in the middle of the afternoon last Dec. 1. Two neighboring apartments in the new Shepherd Square complex just east of downtown also were hit.

While thankfully no one was physically hurt, the trauma from exposure to such a violent act can interrupt a child's normal development and ability to learn in school.

My daughter's experience and a spike in gun violence last summer—with teens shooting automatic weapons out of stolen cars, kids as young as 13 charged with murder—made me want to shine a light on the impact of gun violence on children and their learning.

As a peace and justice advocate for nearly 20 years, I know my daughter's experience is not unique. In all parts of our city, citizens report hearing gunfire to police every day and gunshots have been heard outside my daughter's apartment multiple times since the day her home was splattered with bullets.

In the first nine months of this year, 65 of the 73 murders in Louisville Metro were from

gunfire, and family and friends—including many young children—struggle with the losses. In all, 276 people were shot from January–September, more than 30 people a month.

Children suffer if they get hit by bullet, witness a shooting, lose someone close or live on edge because the crack of gunshots is as common as the chirping of a songbird. They often can't focus or learn in school. Some can't sleep and have nightmares. Some withdraw, others act out or retaliate and resort to violence themselves.

In sharing their stories on the following pages—some redemptive, some tragic—we can all have a better understanding of what this sick culture of gun violence is doing to our children and their ability to learn. We can all do a better job recognizing children who are suffering and providing help they need to succeed in school and reach their potential.

There are many people—teachers, police officers, counselors, therapists, physicians, nurses, others—doing amazing work to help victims and their families. But much more is needed. Here is my call to action as a start:

Parents/adults with children under your care: Talk to your child's teacher or school counselor if your child has been exposed to violence so they can be supportive and helpful. Don't assume your child is ok. Seek services for your child through the school or others such as their doctor if your family needs help.

Teachers: Know the symptoms of trauma in a child, which vary based on age and the individual child but include acting out, aggressive verbal or physical behavior, or withdrawal and not doing their work. Use school resources to link the child to professional evaluation and help.

Principals/administrators: Support teacher training at your schools, and make sure children in need receive evaluations and follow up treatment if needed.

I am deeply grateful to survivors of gun violence and others for sharing their stories. May God bless the victims, survivors and the angels in their lives who support them.

#### DEVIN SESAY AND FAMILY

Before June 13, he was excited about his upcoming freshman year at Atherton High School. He was also relieved because his big brother, Devin Sesay, a rising Atherton senior, would teach him the ropes at his new school.

The brothers would walk to the bus stop together every morning. On the first day, they would be sporting new shoes that Devin, a smart dresser, would find online.

Everything changed on June 13 for the boy, 14, and his close extended family whose members first came to the United States 27 years ago to escape war-torn Liberia in West Africa.

On June 13, Devin was shot and died on Roselane Street in Smoketown, three doors down from the family's home. He was 17. Family members said Devin had been walking home late at night from playing basketball in nearby Shelby Park when shots were fired from a passing car.

Devin's family—his grandfather, mother and four brothers, his aunt and cousins—are dealing with devastating shock, grief and anger over his murder, while also coping with other major life adjustments.

A few weeks after Devin's murder, his mother, grandfather and brothers moved to a brick ranch house and new school district 13 miles away in southern Jefferson County.

"I was afraid for the boys," said their mother, Maima Karneh, 41, a certified nurse assistant who works nights at the Home of the Innocents, not far from Smoketown.

Her boys and other children often hung out at their home, inside playing video games,

outside on the porch or nearby throwing a football or shooting hoops.

She liked having them around the house where they'd lived for 10 years, she said, because it meant they weren't on the street. She enforced stern rules, checked on her boys often by phone and Devin had never been in any trouble, she said.

Ten days after Devin's murder, another shooting solidified her decision to move. On June 23, Tyrese Garvin, 20, was shot almost directly across the street from where her son was killed. Garvin had been visiting his newborn twins at University Hospital. He died five days later in the same hospital where his twins were being treated. Three juveniles including a 14-year-old were charged with his murder.

"There was no way we were going to stay," Karneh said.

She and Devin knew Garvin, who was a senior when Devin was a freshman at Atherton and Garvin attended Devin's memorial service, a few days before he was murdered.

In their new home, Devin's portrait hangs in the living room near the front door and his brother at times stares at it. "It reminds me of how many good days we had," he said. "I was supposed to go to Atherton with him this year. He was supposed to show me the bus stops and everything and it just kills me." Instead his brother is gone, he's is a new neighborhood and attending Moore High School, and he said it doesn't feel right.

The school alerted his mother to concerns about him focusing and his grief and he and family members are receiving counseling. Two other younger brothers, 11 and 13, are attending Moore Middle School and said they are doing their best to live up to Devin's memory.

Devin's four brothers—the oldest is 21—and a 10-year-old cousin were at home when Devin was killed and some of them heard the shots.

Karneh's 14-year-old son called her at work to report hearing gunfire and that Devin was not home. When Devin did not respond to her texts, "I knew it was him," she said.

Her sister, Sietta Karneh, said the family wants to keep Devin's memory alive. He was an outgoing, athletic, fun teenager with a slew of friends who have taken his death hard, posting remembrances on social media, his aunt said. She and her sister have raised their kids as one family. "I also lost a son," she said about Devin. "I can't get over how close to home he was when they took his life . . . I can't get over this nightmare."

\*Deadliest Month of 2019: June—15 homicides, the highest number of murders in any month in the past five years and more than twice the seven homicides in June 2018.

#### FAMILY HUNKERS DOWN

Near 22nd and Oak streets in West Louisville, a 12-year-old boy and his 13-year-old sister decided to stay inside during the summer because they were afraid they'd get shot if they ventured outdoors.

Their parents don't want their names revealed. "We are so close to it. We're a stone's throw away from it in either direction," their father said about the gun violence.

Their mother, who remembers a safe environment when she was growing up in the neighborhood, said they hear gunshots two or three times a month at least, usually at night. She said they stay inside, and don't go near the windows.

"You hear it so much you get used to it. You hope the gunshots don't affect your family." When news reports spotlight a deadly shooting in areas where she has family "you think my brother lives down there. I hope it wasn't him. You tend to tense up when you hear things like that."

Their children are keenly aware, too. They know about gunshot deaths not far from

their home during the summer, and a video on social media of teens with guns touting an "east vs west" rivalry with random gun violence.

"It's messed up," the boy said.

He said he began staying inside their house in early July after he was outside with friends in the early evening and a car pulled up on their street with a gun pointing out the window. He ran to his backyard and said after that, "I decided on my own not to go out."

His sister said she thinks "the world's just getting violent." She didn't go outside "because the west and the east was doing a shootout." She said she learned about it through a video on Facebook.

Their parents said they don't call police because they don't think there is much the police can do, although they wish there were more routine police patrols visible on their streets. Police respond to gunfire, but without adequate information they are unable to make an arrest, their father said.

"You don't want to keep your kids locked in," their mother said. "You are scared for their safety, too. You don't know what to do."

Citizen reports of hearing gunshots over 18 months, from Jan. 1, 2018–June 2019, totaled 4,558, from every Louisville Metro police district.

Homicides by police district Jan.–Sept. 2019: 1st District—12; 2nd District—25; 3rd District—11; 4th District—13; 5th District—3; 6th District—5; 7th District—2; 8th District—2; Total: 73.

#### DIONTAE "TAY" REED

At 18, Diontae "Tay" Reed seems happy, with a playful sense of humor and a lot to be proud of—good grades, a diploma from Ballard High School, a future full of possibilities including college.

He's come a long way from age 13 when he was shot in the back, underwent surgery and spent 11 days in the hospital. His homes have been shot up four different times, and he knows more people who have been shot or killed than he can count on both hands.

"I knew about the violence in my neighborhood at a young age," he said. "I have trust issues. I don't trust people easily so wherever I go I'm always looking."

Now he's the first person in his family to have graduated from high school, months after he and his family—his mother and a younger sister—were evicted from their home in the Portland neighborhood. He is staying with a friend's family while his mother and sister are living apart with relatives. He takes the bus from the apartment where he is living in the Portland neighborhood to Mall St. Matthews and back for his part-time job at a shoe store.

Diontae wonders if he's ready for college, and he's deeply worried about how he would pay for tuition, but he is exploring options as he also dreams of having a driver's license and a car someday.

He credits his mother, who "was always on me" for keeping him on the right track, off the streets and focused on school. He also credits Ballard High School teachers and a special tutor for helping him achieve. "I always made teachers laugh," he said with a smile, and "they became friends to me." He can tick off the names of several he admired.

He attended Shawnee Academy his freshman year but pursued a transfer to Ballard with the help of his mother. "I felt like if I had stayed at that school I wouldn't have learned anything," because teachers spent so much time trying to control the classroom, he said.

His cousin had been doing well at Ballard, had a tutor, and he thought that formula would also work for him, and it did.

“I’m seeing I’m getting good grades,” he said. “I do not want to go home and be on the streets and do something that could get me killed.”

His two older brothers, 23 and 22, chose a “way different path.” When he was shot four years ago, he was running away from a fight his brothers got into with another group of boys. When asked why he thought his homes had been shot up in the past, he responded, “my brothers.” While he’s close to them, “I could never ask them what they’re doing.”

While in the hospital, recovering from surgery and a collapsed lung, he was angry but told relatives and friends who visited him that he didn’t want any more violence, no retaliation. He said he would have liked to have seen whoever shot him go to jail but no arrests were made.

He participated in the Christopher 2X “Hood2Hood” antiviolence campaign, preaching non-violence door-to-door and in neighborhoods and remains active in anti-violence and community service programs.

“The violence going on now is terrible, crazy,” he said. “People don’t even want to go outside because of what is going on.”

73—Number of homicides in Louisville in the first nine months of 2019, an increase of nearly 20 percent compared to the first nine months of 2018 when 61 murders were committed.

72.6%—53, of the 73 homicide victims in the first nine months of 2019 were black compared to 63% for the same time period in 2018.

32%—of the victims, 25 killed, were under age 25, with eight victims 11–17 years old. One victim was under age 11.

Homicides: 2014: 55; 2015: 80; 2016: 118; 2017: 102; 2018: 80.

89% of the 73 murder victims, 65 people, in the first nine months of 2019 were killed by gunfire, the highest percentage of homicides by gunfire for a comparable time period in the past five years.

#### TRIBUTE TO ALGENE SAJERY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I rise to thank Algene Sajery, a senior member of my foreign policy legislative staff, for her incredible service to the State of Maryland, our country, and by virtue of her foreign policy and national security legislative achievements, to the international community. I am incredibly grateful for all that we have accomplished during her tenure.

Algene has served as my senior foreign policy and national security advisor since 2012 and concurrently as democratic policy director for the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations from 2015 through 2018. Over the years, Algene has served as my lead staff author and/or negotiator of several landmark national security and foreign policy laws, including the Global Magnitsky Human Rights and Accountability Act, P.L. 114–328; the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act, P.L. 114–191; the African Growth and Opportunity Act and Millennium Challenge Act Modernization Act, AGOA and MCA Modernization Act, P.L. 115–167; the Global Food Security Act, P.L. 114–195; and the Electrify Africa Act, P.L. 114–121. These accomplishments demonstrate the wide-ranging policy areas over which Algene has extensive knowledge. Her ability to

leverage her knowledge to help negotiate and advance such policies into law and her passion for doing so are what set Algene apart from most others in this highly competitive field.

But Algene’s accomplishments do not end with advancing landmark human rights, transparency, foreign assistance, and international development legislation. Algene has also worked tirelessly at my direction on several bills related to human rights in conflict zones, including the Syrian War Crimes Accountability Act and the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act P.L. 115–441. Algene’s efforts have helped cement my legacy in these arenas and as Special Representative for Anti-Semitism, Racism, Intolerance for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe—OSCE—Parliamentary Assembly, to help propel my work to create a world where the promise of “never again” in response to genocide will one day bear truth.

Our work together has transcended several Presidential administrations. We have observed Executive overstep with regard to war powers on numerous occasions. We have opened our eyes to the use of U.S. manufactured weapons to commit war crimes and repress human rights around the world. In response, Algene and I also developed my signature arms sales oversight legislation, the Enhancing Human Rights Protections in Arms Sales Act of 2019, and numerous bills, resolutions, and amendments on authorization of use of military force, conflict prevention, peace and reconciliation, and community resiliency policies.

Algene’s successful legislative record is testament not only to her expertise on foreign policy and national security issues but also to her keen negotiating skills, ability to work across the aisle, and incomparable political acumen. But Algene’s service on my legislative staff has gone far and beyond helping me draft and advance legislation. One of the most striking qualities of Algene’s character and, in my opinion, one of the most noteworthy accomplishments as a part of her distinct legacy on my team, is her dedication to helping others around her.

Algene is one of only a handful of women of color working on foreign policy and national security issues and the first African-American woman to serve in a leadership position on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Over the years, she has served as a mentor to women of color at various stages in their careers, offering advice, support, and guidance. Algene has always made time to support those around her because she understands the challenges of launching and navigating a career in foreign policy and national security, and she genuinely wants to propel others towards similarly successful career paths.

Algene is a highly effective legislative negotiator, strategist, coalition builder, and a true trailblazer. Her

knowledge and expertise are unparalleled, but her passion, creativity, and tenacity truly are what have made her an asset to my team and a voice that I will greatly miss in my office.

It has been an honor working with Algene over the years, and I wish her nothing but happiness and success as she transitions her career off Capitol Hill.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

#### TRIBUTE TO SCOTT BENNETT

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the career of Scott Bennett, who is retiring as director of the Arkansas Department of Transportation after nearly 32 years of service and dedication to the State.

Scott assumed his current post as director in 2011; however, he has been an asset to ARDOT since his summers as an engineering intern. Scott’s hard work, passion, and knowledge allowed him to build a celebrated career that has greatly benefited the State and its citizens. He received a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from the University of Arkansas in 1989 and became a full-time employee of the Planning and Research Division. He also earned a master’s degree in civil engineering in 1994 while working for ARDOT.

During the past 9 years, his effective and influential leadership has been indisputable. Scott led ARDOT’s efforts to implement significant highway rehabilitation efforts, including the 2011 Interstate Rehabilitation Program and the 2012 Connecting Arkansas Program, both of which were approved by voters.

Scott is an active leader in the transportation and engineering communities in the State and at the national level. He was appointed to the Arkansas Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Professional Land Surveyors in 2015, where he currently serves as president. In 2017, Scott was elected secretary-treasurer of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, after previously serving as a member of the board of directors. Scott has served on other various organizations to support the transportation industry and improve roadways for all Americans.

Scott has earned many accolades over the course of his career. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials presented him with the Thomas H. MacDonald Memorial Award, which recognizes top engineers in the transportation profession. In 2005, he received the University of Arkansas Young Engineer Alumni of the Year Award, and in 2019 he was honored with the University of Arkansas College of Engineering’s Distinguished Alumni Award. In 2010, Scott was inducted into the Arkansas Academy of Civil Engineering.

I applaud Scott for his accomplished career with the Arkansas Department