

SUMMIT ON CURBING THE VIOLENCE IN CHICAGO

Creating A Path Towards Solutions

By Adam Sheppard and Michael Strom

Distinguished members of the legal community came together to address violence in Chicago at a full-day summit hosted by the CBA on May 19. Justice Anne M. Burke and Daniel M. Kotin (CBA President) issued thoughtful opening remarks, stressing the urgency to address the unacceptable current level of violence.

The summit featured four sessions, each aimed at developing solutions: (1) Reducing Violence by Improving the Relationship Between Law Enforcement and the Communities They Serve; (2) The Affected Communities: People, Police, Problems and Progress; (3) The Impact of Media and Social Media on Chicago Violence; and (4) Gun Violence and the Illinois Justice System: What Chicago Can Learn from Other Cities. The keynote luncheon speaker was Ronal Serpas, PhD., Professor of Practice—Criminology and Justice, Loyola University New Orleans. Chief Judge Timothy Evans and the Hon. Thomas R. Mulroy issued heartfelt closing remarks.

Reducing Violence by Improving the Relationship Between Law Enforcement and the Communities They Serve

Panelists: Cook County State’s Attorney Kim Foxx; Andrew Holmes (crisis responder, Chicago Survivors: community activist); Chicago Police Department Superintendent Eddie T. Johnson; Pamela J. Meanes (past president of the National Bar Association and a partner in Thompson Coburn); and Alderman Roderick T. Sawyer (City of Chicago, Sixth Ward). *Moderator:* Antonio M. Romanucci (Romanucci & Blandin, LLC).

The panelists addressed ways to address schisms between law enforcement and the community they serve. Superintendent Johnson discussed new CPD policies changing rules on police use of force. Pamela Meanes summarized case law



regarding the use of force. The National Bar Association, of which she is past president, conducts “know your rights” presentations to different community and police organizations. State’s Attorney Foxx stressed the importance of diversion programs to help reduce the mass incarceration of minorities in Cook County. Such programs divert lower risk offenders and those who need treatment from jail and treat them in the community. Alderman Sawyer discussed the need to allocate city development funds for restaurants and other commercial establishments in distressed communities.

The Affected Communities: People, Police, Problems and Progress

Panelists: Jadine Chou (Chief Safety and Security Officer, Chicago Public Schools); Bishop James E. Dukes (Liberation Chris-

tian Center); Peggy Flaherty (L.C.S.W., Sr. Vice President, Clinical Operations, Thresholds); Reverend Dr. Walter Johnson (Greater Institutional A.M.E. Church); Reverend Michael L. Pflieger (Pastor, Faith Community of St. Sabina). *Moderator:* Hon. Thomas R. Mulroy.

This panel analyzed the communities regularly affected by gun violence and new initiatives for making them safer. Peggy Flaherty discussed Thresholds’ work in providing crisis intervention, de-escalation training, and mental health services. A number of court programs have utilized Thresholds’ services in diversion programs.

Father Pflieger characterized individuals in the most affected communities as having “present traumatic stress disorder.” He has organized a basketball tournament involving four different gangs.

Jadine Chou addressed the importance of Chicago public schools eliminating “zero-tolerance” policies. Student suspensions are down and more children have been put into jobs. Reverend Johnson opined that jail does not adequately deter violence in his community. He discussed the importance of parents taking responsibility for their children at a young age before behavioral problems manifest. Bishop Dukes echoed that sentiment. As he put it, “feed the ducks even if you don’t see any.”

Professor Ronal Serpas, Ph.D., Loyola University New Orleans, Department of Criminology and Justice, gave the keynote address at the Summit luncheon. Serpas, who retired from a 34-year career in law enforcement in 2014, had served 13 years as the police superintendent/chief in New Orleans, Nashville and Washington State Patrol. Serpas is the founding Co-Chair of Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration. He cautioned against using 1970’s tactics on 21st-century problems. He stressed the need to get mentally ill and substance impaired people out of jails and into mental health/drug treatment programs, and recommended the following:

- Prioritize violent crime
- Enact federal sentencing reform
- Increase community policing
- Use “hot spot” policing

The Impact of Media and Social Media on Chicago Violence

Panelists: Amy P. Campanelli (Cook County Public Defender); Jeffrey Jones (FBI Chicago Intelligence Analyst); Christopher Mallette (John Jay College, Executive Director, Chicago Violence Reduction Strategy); Kristen McQueary (Chicago Tribune, Editorial Board); and Andrew Papachristos (Yale University, Associate Professor of Sociology, Director of the Policy Lab). *Moderator:* Lori Lightfoot, Mayer Brown LLP. Facebook and other social media sites can escalate violence by spreading it beyond neighborhood disputes and turf wars. Professor Papachristos’ studies indicate that social networks can increase the chance of being shot up to 40%, depending on the people in a given

network. Public Defender Campanelli noted that social media evidence is commonplace in court and is often referenced in bond hearings.

Gun Violence and the Justice System: What Can Chicago Learn From Other Cities.

Panelists: Roseanna Ander (Executive Director, University of Chicago Crime Lab); Walter Katz (Deputy Chief of Staff for Public Safety, City of Chicago); Honorable Patricia Mendoza (Circuit Court of Cook County, Juvenile Justice Division); and John O’Malley (William Blair and Company Corporate Security Director). *Moderator:* Daniel M. Kotin (CBA President; Partner, Tomasik Kotin Kasserman).

This panel examined how other large, similarly diverse, cities confronted gun violence epidemics. The panel discussed whether a city’s justice system can dramatically combat a gun epidemic. Roseanna Ander noted that the number of murders in Chicago increased dramatically when Chicago police stop and frisks declined from 60,000 per month to 10,000 per month. However, a similar drop in New York City’s stop and frisks also accompanied a drop in the murder rate. New York City and Los Angeles have far fewer shootings by 11 and 12 year-old children.

Judge Mendoza noted that, in Juvenile Court, the age of children charged with violent crimes seems to be decreasing. In 2006, she saw 15-year-old juveniles charged with lesser crimes. Today, 13-year-olds regularly appear in court on gun charges.

Walter Katz opined that sentencing enhancements for gun offenses helped curb combat gun violence in Los Angeles. The panel members, however, placed the greatest emphasis on investing time and money directly in the most affected communities.

WHAT’S YOUR OPINION?

Send your views to the **CBA Record**, 321 South Plymouth Court, Chicago, IL 60604, or to Publications Director David Beam at dbeam@chicagobar.org. The magazine reserves the right to edit letters prior to publishing.

As John O’Malley stated, “we need more grandmas to keep kids in line the way they used to do.”

Closing Remarks

Chief Judge Timothy C. Evans’ and the Hon. Thomas R. Mulroy’s closing remarks echoed the sentiments of the panelists and audience members—“we won’t stop working until peace is restored in these neighborhoods.” ■

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As the gun violence epidemic continues to plague Chicago, Judge Mulroy wants the CBA to continue to work toward solutions that will remediate the problem. Watch your eBulletin this fall for further opportunities to get involved.

RESOURCES FOR NEW LAWYERS

Just getting started in the practice of law in Chicago? The CBA offers many resources and programs to help new lawyers. Find out more about MCLE, start-up boot camp, career & mentoring services, practice area pointer videos, and volunteer opportunities. All under the YLS tab at www.chicagobar.org