



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

For Immediate Release
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Statement by Mayor Eric E. Jackson on Public Safety in Trenton

I want to share my thoughts on the murder of 15-year-old Kyler Bragg, and report to you a summary of our work to deploy Trenton's 257-strong police force to address crime as part of our efforts to strengthen public safety with the help of law enforcement and community partners.

First, I wish to convey my sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Kyler Bragg. My family and administration are praying for this family, whose son's life ended so abruptly and unnecessarily. No parent should have to endure the loss of a child, ever, especially to gun violence. This local and national crisis requires a significant alignment of interest that are working comprehensively toward a solution to end this violence. I believe that complex public-policy challenges cannot be solved exclusively by elected officials. They require high-intensity community engagement that is authentic, sustainable, and yields impactful results. Since I took office three years ago, I have been working with leaders from community, faith, government, law enforcement and the business community, to achieve this outcome. But much work still remains.

We are working diligently to use our police force to address a number of public-safety issues and violent crimes, especially those with guns tops the agenda. Our police officers now work 12-hour shifts, a schedule that we successfully negotiated in 2015 through the collective bargaining process. This key change allows command staff to strategically deploy police more effectively and efficiently. Trenton's Police Radio Room receives more than 100,000 calls for service annually.

Last Thursday, we mobilized a task force of more than 30 officers from our partner law-enforcement agencies to target crime hot spots around the city, work that resulted in 19 arrests for various offenses. We will repeat this strategy in the days and weeks ahead, and continue to gather intelligence in collaboration with our county, state, and federal law-enforcement partners to identify and arrest individuals engaged in criminal activity, especially violent crime. We will advance our partnership with the Shooting Response Team and use our Street Crimes Units, Trenton Violence Reduction Strategy, and Violent Enterprise Source Targeted Program (VEST) to target gang violence and large-scale drug sales with the help of law-enforcement partners. These initiatives are proactive and effective tools in our response to crime involving firearms.

With the help of funding authorized by Governor Chris Christie and New Jersey State Attorney General Christopher Porrino, we are preparing to install hundreds of high-resolution video surveillance cameras in targeted areas of the city, in addition to improved lighting. To strengthen police-community relations combined with our Police Explorers and summer camp for young people, we now have two community-affairs detectives and an additional police officer detailed to the Trenton Police Department's Office of Community Concerns, which can be reached through the Police Director's office at (609) 989-4060.

We are working closely with our nonprofit partners and we have planned a robust schedule of summer recreational activities for Trenton youth. In addition to our summer-pools program where we have made considerable capital improvements, we provide soccer, tennis and baseball, as well as leadership development, field trips, literacy programs and STEM activities. The city and more than 50 nonprofits in Trenton have developed activities for the summer and year-round in which parents, guardians, and caregivers are encouraged to involve their children.

I urge parents to know where your children are at all times, to be aware of their associations, to be actively involved in their academic development, and to fill their free time with recreational activities organized by the city and other Trenton organizations—the YMCA of Trenton, Boys and Girls Clubs, East Trenton Collaborative, PEI Kids, Urban Promise, and Isles just to name a few. Please visit the city's website at trentonnj.org to download the "Summer in the Capital City" brochure that details these activities.

Unfortunately, crime is ever-present in our society. For America's post-industrial cities like Trenton, growing our economy and reducing crime are parallel public-policy challenges. Trenton's economy is growing. We are attracting new investment, building new housing, new businesses, creating new jobs, new homeowners and renters. Our events continue to play host to tens of thousands of people who enjoy our city's unique appeal—its history, culture, architecture and manufacturing innovation.

As we mourn the loss of one of our own children, we know that we must learn from this and work even harder together to ensure a safer Trenton for everyone and a brighter future for our children.