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House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg

August 27, 2021

Shondell Revell, Executive Director
Philadelphia Office of Violence Prevention
1425 Arch St., 4th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Mr. Revell:

I am writing today to offer my full support for Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity's (PLSE) application for funding under the Anti-Violence Community Expansion Grant Program.

The reasons for gun violence are numerous and complex. One thing that is certain is the fact that our communities can no longer live under the constant threat of bloodshed breaking out on our neighborhood streets. We need to engage everyone to confront this epidemic – an epidemic that has claimed far too many lives and shattered too many families.

That is why I am supporting PLSE's proposal. First, their track record and history of advocacy on behalf of criminal justice reform is unparalleled in our region and state. In fact, PLSE is the only organization in the commonwealth that focuses almost exclusively on the issue of criminal records and the damage they cause lower-income individuals, as well as the process for eliminating them. Second, they fully realize that criminal record clearing is a form of workforce development because individuals with criminal pasts encounter significant barriers to obtaining employment – employment that has been shown to reduce the likelihood of gun violence. In addition, PLSE has been a great partner to me and my office in assisting constituents on how best to navigate the expungement and pardon process, holding informative town halls and discussions about criminal justice reform regularly throughout Philadelphia. Their knowledge and experience tackling problems in the community is awe-inspiring and worthy of city financial support, especially in an area as pressing and urgent as gun violence.

As Rev. Gregory Boyle famously said, "Nothing stops a bullet like a job." It is for these reasons and many more, that I support PLSE's application for funds under the Anti-Violence Community Expansion Grant Program. PLSE is a great partner for the city to have as we look for new and innovative ways to stem the tide of violence in our communities. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanna E. McClinton".

Joanna McClinton
State Representative
191st Legislative District - House Democratic Leader