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Subject: RE: CDC Community Violence Prevention Resource for Action launch

+Leslie

Hi everyone,

I think we should have one person respond. I've added Leslie to consider this given her involvement in other conversations.

-Tom

From: Jane Ramos (b)(6)

Sent: Sunday, January 7, 2024 6:32 PM

To: Whitson, Cassidy (CDC/NCIPC/DVP) <ott4@cdc.gov>; Simon, Thomas (CDC/NCIPC/DVP) <tgs9@cdc.gov>; Metzler, Marilyn (CDC/NCIPC/DVP) (CTR) <mom7@cdc.gov>; DAngelo, Denise V. (CDC/NCIPC/DVP) <dnd1@cdc.gov>; Ottley, Phyllis (CDC/NCIPC/DVP) <vci8@cdc.gov>; DAngelo, Denise V. (CDC/NCIPC/DVP) <dnd1@cdc.gov>; Simon, Thomas (CDC/NCIPC/DVP) <tgs9@cdc.gov>; Ottley, Phyllis (CDC/NCIPC/DVP) <vci8@cdc.gov>; wuw9@cdc.gov

Subject: Re: CDC Community Violence Prevention Resource for Action launch

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Under the Data Quality Act, doesn't the CDC have to have a factual basis for claims it makes?

A draft CDC Community Violence Prevention Resource claims that "Evidence shows that increasing punitive measures, including incarceration, does not reduce community violence." The draft is posted in the news article, "EXCLUSIVE: CDC Champions Addressing Racism, 'Injustices' Over Jailing Criminals to Prevent Violence," Daily Caller, January 5, 2024, found at <https://dailycaller.com/2024/01/05/cdc-criminal-justice-community-violence/>.

That claim isn't accurate. Studies and real life refute it. There are real life examples of incarceration and other punitive measures reducing community violence.

There are many examples of serial killers and other repeat criminals who kept committing acts of violence until they were incarcerated or executed, at which point, they stopped committing violent crimes because they were incarcerated, and thus unable to commit more crimes. So catching more

violent criminals -- that is, increasing punitive measures -- does reduce community violence, by keeping dangerous criminals from committing more crimes with impunity.

For example, the serial killer Joseph Paul Franklin killed at least 11 people, but stopped killing people when he was arrested and incarcerated (Years later, he was executed for his murders). See *Joseph Paul Franklin*, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Paul_Franklin.

Studies also find that incarceration reduces crime, and that releasing inmates early increases the crime rate. See, e.g., Alessandro Barbarino & Giovanni Mastrobuono, *the Incapacitation Effect of Incarceration from Several Italian Collective Pardons*, American Economic Journal, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 1-37 (2014), available at <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.6.1.1>

Some studies also find that longer prison sentences deter crime more effectively than shorter sentences. See, e.g., Daniel Kessler & Steven D. Levitt, *Using Sentence Enhancements to Distinguish between Deterrence and Incapacitation*, National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 6484 (1998), <https://www.nber.org/papers/w6484>.

A study concluded that certain crimes in California fell significantly because California voters adopted Proposition 8, which mandated longer sentences for repeat offenders who kill, rape, and rob others. It found those longer sentences deterred many crimes from being committed. Its finding reflected the fact that three years after Proposition 8 was adopted, crimes punished with enhanced sentences had "fallen roughly 20-40 percent compared to" crimes not covered by enhanced sentences. See Kessler & Levitt, *Using Sentence Enhancements to Distinguish between Deterrence and Incapacitation*, National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 6484 (1998), <https://www.nber.org/papers/w6484>.

If people are more likely to get away with murder or other serious violent crimes, and avoid incarceration, then they are more likely to commit those crimes. America has a lower rate of catching murderers than Europe, which experts think contributes to it having a higher homicide rate than Europe. NPR cited a researcher -- Philip Cook at Duke University -- pointing out that incarceration is needed for deterrence, but that isn't happening in places in the United States where rates of catching murderers (clearance rates) are very low. Those low clearance rates fuel devastating high homicide rates in the inner city. Duke University's Philip Cook described "low clearance rates undermining future investigations and potentially driving up the murder rate in some minority communities where lack of arrests undermines deterrence," according to NPR. See Eric Westervelt, "More people are getting away with murder. Unsolved killings reach a record high," NPR, April 29, 2023, available at <https://www.npr.org/2023/04/29/1172899691/more-people-are-getting-away-with-murder-unsolved-killings-reach-a-record-high>.

Maryland and Virginia are adjacent states that are rather similar, but Virginia has a much lower crime rate, apparently because it incarcerates inmates longer for the same offense than Maryland does, further illustrating that "increasing punitive measures" does reduce community violence to some extent.

Counties in Maryland have much higher crime rates than the neighboring counties they border in Virginia, as news articles and think-tanks have pointed out. For example, the Heritage Foundation described how Virginia's Fairfax County ended up with less than half the crime of neighboring Montgomery County, Maryland after Virginia cracked down on crime, abolishing parole for violent felons. See, e.g., David B. Mulhausen, *ED120999: Crime in Two Counties*, Heritage Foundation, Dec. 3, 1999, available at <https://www.heritage.org/crime-and-justice/commentary/ed120999-crime-two-counties>.

Virginia has much lower rates of robbery, murder, assault, and property crime than Maryland does. Especially robbery -- Virginia gives robbers much harsher sentences for robbery than Maryland does.

Virginia has a higher incarceration rate and lower crime rate and murder rate than Maryland, according to USA Today. See *High crime rate: What states are the most dangerous, with most violent crimes per capita?*, USA Today, Jan. 13, 2020, <https://www.usatoday.com/picture-gallery/money/2020/01/13/most-dangerous-states-in-america/40969391/>

In light of such studies and real life examples, it is a mistake for CDC to claim that "increasing punitive measures, including incarceration, does not reduce community violence."

Claiming that would be at odds with the Data Quality Act, also known as the Information Quality Act.

The CDC Community Violence Prevention Resource for Action should be revised to reflect that. Thank you for reviewing this.