



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

100 Holliday Street, Room 250
Baltimore, Maryland 21202



Dear 

I am writing you because you are a citizen of Baltimore who, because of your high-risk behavior and association with group violence, may be at very high risk of engaging in and/or being the victim of violence. As Mayor of Baltimore and as your neighbor, I am committed to doing everything we can to keep you alive and safe. I believe that *all* of Baltimore's citizens should be safe in their communities, and that nobody should have to live in fear of being hurt, killed, or losing loved ones. This is the City's highest priority. We have tried to stop the violence solely with law enforcement, but this has meant arresting and imprisoning far too many young men and women. This has also hurt our families and communities and failed to make Baltimore a safer place.

As part of the effort to keep Baltimore's communities safe, the City has launched the Group Violence Reduction Strategy. It is a partnership of the City, Baltimore Police Department, Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, the United States Attorney's Office, federal and state law enforcement agencies including the DEA, ATF, FBI, U.S. Marshals, Maryland DPSCS, DJS and others, other government services, service providers and community members working closely together to stop the violence.

It is only fair to tell you that the legal risks for violence have changed. The violence has gotten so out of hand that law enforcement is doing something new and different. We are now focusing on **groups**, social networks of individuals who are willing to shoot people for each other, when there is violence. The groups drive the violence, and violent groups will be our top priority. This means that if a group commits an act of violence, law enforcement will bring charges for any and all crimes anyone in the group may be committing. **It is very important that you understand this so that you can protect yourself.**

As part of the Group Violence Reduction Strategy, the U.S. Attorney's Office is working with the State's Attorney's Office every day. Federal and state prosecutors are giving priority to all violent offenders and their known associates. All cases brought against such persons will be prosecuted in the court, federal or state, where the longest sentence can be imposed. Convicted felons who possess firearms or ammunition may be prosecuted in federal court. Drug sellers, also, may be prosecuted in federal court. These prosecutions will be given priority and maximum sentences will be pursued. Where the facts support it, we will be looking at probation and parole violations, outstanding warrants, open cases, cold cases, drug sale and possession violations, unpaid fines and child support, weapons charges – any and all legal violations committed by members of violent groups.

I think it is only fair that we tell you this. We do not want to have to do it, but you deserve to know the consequences should you proceed down the path that leads to violence. You can protect yourself, your friends, and your community by staying away from violence and violent people. **While this communication should in no way be considered by you as any benefit for your current and immediate charges, it is only fair to advise you that further violent behavior or any future association with violent people exposes you to further legal sanctions.**

You will be doing important work for your friends, family and community if you help me spread the word – tell anybody you think needs to hear it that we would like to help them and that our way of enforcing the law has changed when it comes to violence. You can help keep yourself and your friends alive, safe, and free which is ultimately what we all want.

Sincerely,



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor
Baltimore City