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Councilmember Thomas Releases 10-Point Action Plan to Address Needs of Teens and Young Adults in Response to Spike in Homicides

Washington, DC—Ward 5 Councilmember Harry “Tommy” Thomas, Jr. today released his 10-point action plan to address the needs of teens and young adults in response to the recent spike in homicides occurring across the Ward. A copy of the plan is attached.

The Councilmember had planned to announce the 10-point plan at an afternoon press conference on April 29, 2008. He cancelled the press conference when a double shooting occurred in the Ward less than an hour before the event was scheduled.

Councilmember Thomas developed his 10-point plan after listening to the comments and concerns raised at a April 28, 2008 teen town hall meeting—Yo Listen Up—which the Councilmember hosted in partnership with WPGC and the DC Department of Parks and Recreation. More than 1,000 people attended the town hall meeting to discuss the recent epidemic of homicides, which includes 17 murders in Ward 5 since January 1, 2008.

“Ward 5 has been besieged with violence,” said Councilmember Thomas. “The double shooting yesterday at Excel Institute demonstrates that we are a community in chaos. We must tackle the underlying causes of this violence from a range of perspectives. That is the goal of my 10-point plan,” said Thomas.

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10-POINT ACTION PLAN

Ward 5 Councilmember Harry “Tommy” Thomas, Jr. developed the following 10-point plan after listening to comments and concerns raised at the April 28, 2008 teen town hall meeting—Yo Listen Up—which the Councilmember hosted in partnership with WPGC and the DC Department of Parks and Recreation. More than 1,000 people attended the town hall meeting to discuss the recent epidemic of homicides, which includes 17 murders in Ward 5 since January 1, 2008.

1. Actively link teens and young adults to local job opportunities.
2. Expand job training and apprenticeship opportunities for young adults; increase awareness of these programs through grassroots marketing initiatives.
3. Open adult education and career center with programs targeting young adults, such as Phelps.
4. Expand GED programs and aggressively market them to teens and young adults.
5. Increase number of mentoring programs and target them in neighborhoods experiencing spikes of violence.
6. Offer mental health screening and mediation services at libraries, recreation centers, and schools; connect teens and young adults with follow-up services.
7. Expand access to drug and alcohol counseling services.
8. Offer physical health screenings at schools, neighborhood clinics, and other public locations.
9. Establish, fund, and promote youth outreach centers through faith-based organizations and youth-oriented nonprofits.
10. Increase programming at recreation centers in “hot spots” and underserved neighborhoods.