

Trenton, NJ – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12), Trenton Mayor Douglas H. Palmer, and Trenton Law Enforcement today highlighted the city’s YouthStat anti-gang program, which is working to prevent at-risk youth from continual involvement in the criminal justice system. Holt secured \$905,000 in the last two federal budgets for the program – funding that will allow the city to serve 300 children in the next three years. YouthStat involves multiple public and private law enforcement, criminal justice, and social service agencies working collaboratively on a weekly basis to identify at-risk youngsters, implement appropriate crime prevention and other intervention approaches, and monitor their progress. Holt is working to secure funding for the program in the Fiscal Year 2010 budget to reach more at-risk children and provide participants with customized programming, such as mentoring, work experience, life skills development, and recreation.

“In more than two years, YouthStat has identified 120 kids who are headed to involvement in gangs, guns, and drugs—with death or jail as the end result—matched them with personalized intervention programs with high standards, and monitored their progress on a regular basis,” Holt said. “I am so pleased to see and hear about the program’s effectiveness from those who would know best. This is an investment that benefits our community and it’s one I am happy to support.”

Mayor Palmer and Trenton Police Director Irving Bradley, Jr. stressed the importance of the federal funding.

“Even those teen agers who grow up in the best of circumstances, with a careful structure and loving support from conscientious parents, still face a difficult journey to adulthood,” Mayor Palmer said. “We all remember those challenging years. When you add to the normal stress of adolescence issues: neglect, abuse, hunger, and many other significant challenges, it becomes clear that child-serving agencies must operate as an integrated, well-oiled machine to keep at-risk youth from falling through the cracks. This is why we are delighted to have the funds to continue refining YouthStat – to keep improving this vital prevention and intervention work.”

“YouthStat’s mission is to improve system coordination and collaboration among the agencies that handle juvenile case management,” said Trenton Police Director Irving Bradley, Jr. “The

goal is to keep young people from getting ensnared in the juvenile justice system – because that leads to entry into the adult criminal justice system.”

YouthStat’s member agencies meet weekly, identifying cases and working to ensure that each Youthstat subject has a stable living environment; is successfully enrolled in an appropriate educational or employment program or gainfully employed; is free of substance abuse; and is connected to at least one social service or mental health provider for support.

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