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Prosecutors, other Law Enforcement  
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Preventing Crime and Violence*

**State Director**  
Bruce R. Clash

**Deputy Director**  
Stephen L. Doster

Contact: Bruce Clash, 717-233-1520

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **West Goshen Police Chief to State House Committee: Fund Afterschool Programs**

Harrisburg, PA, August 5, 2008 — West Goshen Township Police Chief Michael J. Carroll told the Pennsylvania House of Representatives' Children and Youth Committee today that Pennsylvania's lack of a coordinated statewide funding plan to make quality afterschool programs available to at-risk youth makes all Pennsylvania communities and all of our citizens more vulnerable to crime—with all of crime's financial and human costs.

Carroll, a 42-year police veteran, told the Committee (including Chester County Republican Carole A. Rubley) that, "Government's most fundamental responsibility at all levels is to protect the public safety." He went on to urge the General Assembly "to begin funding quality after-school programs that offer kids constructive activities during the peak hours of juvenile crime."

In his testimony, Carroll cited research examined by the bipartisan, nonprofit, anti-crime organization Fight Crime: Invest in Kids showing that on school days, the hours from 3 to 6 pm are also the peak hours when children are most likely to become victims of crime, be in an automobile accident, smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs.

Fortunately, Carroll said, quality afterschool programs can cut crime and transform the "prime time for juvenile crime" into hours of academic enrichment, constructive recreation and community service. For example, a study of San Francisco's Bayview Safe Haven afterschool program found that, among kids with prior histories of arrest, those who did not participate in the program were twice as likely to be arrested during the six-month initial intervention period as program participants. Among kids with no prior histories of arrest, those who did not participate were three times more likely than participants to be arrested during the same intervention period.

"When violence occurs, punishment is important and necessary," Carroll said. "But we must also invest in proven approaches that keep at-risk kids from committing crimes in the first place. Fortunately, quality afterschool programs can do just that."

Carroll mentioned that the current primary source of afterschool funding in Pennsylvania (the federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program) is coming under attack with Congress considering a \$300 million or 27% cut in funding. This funding cut would mean that one out of every four kids now served by the program would be out on the streets after school. This is especially troubling given that slightly more than one-third of children who are unsupervised after school in Pennsylvania are currently in an after-school program. The Coatesville Area and Kennett Consolidated School Districts operate 21<sup>st</sup> Century afterschool programs in Chester County.

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*FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS is a bipartisan, anti-crime organization led by more than 4,000 sheriffs, police chiefs, prosecutors and victims of violent crime. Its mission is to identify and advocate for what really works to keep kids from becoming criminals.*