



August 9, 2019

Dear Friend,

Earlier this week I was able to connect with Bostonians across the city during National Night Out. These were wonderful celebrations of community, police, and city government working together to uplift our neighborhoods. Yet, I heard similar concerns everywhere while talking with residents. Questions about safety in our neighborhoods. Worries that, once the festivities concluded all they would be left with were nice memories and streets that have seen a shocking uptick in violence this summer. No one should live with that concern.

This is not an academic exercise for me. So far this year there have been multiple shootings, including a murder, blocks from the end of my street in either direction. Sadly the intersection of Senator Bolling Circle and Harvard Street is not unique in this distinction; a distinction in Boston that is too often more applicable to black and brown communities than anywhere else.

Throughout this campaign I have heard two main narratives around violence prevention from residents who experience the impact of violence and trauma, especially related to guns, on a regular basis in their neighborhoods. The first is that they know there are good programs that are showing results, but not receiving the support they need to operate, scale up, and maximize their efforts and impacts to keep our communities safe. The second is that they want to see innovation in addressing these issues because many of the old approaches have not worked.

Some would say these perspectives are mutually exclusive; I disagree. I believe that these positions are in fact complementary to one another. People want solutions AND support. I hear and respect this. I also know that no single individual or organization has "the" answer to the problem of community violence.

Communities are understandably skeptical of those who claim they do, and are tired of constantly being overpromised and underdelivered. My commitment as your next City Councilor At-large is to be an active, engaged, & humble partner for those addressing issues of violence in our city; led and informed in that work by the experiences & voices of those most impacted to ensure that we develop and support strategies that work both in theory and in practice. My drive to create safer streets must be balanced with the recognition that I have ideas, but not all of the answers.

Part of increasing public safety in Boston is addressing the circumstances at work in the lives of people and communities in a holistic way. This means investing in areas such as more robust programming for job creation, small business development, and educational opportunity – policies that I will be elaborating on in the coming weeks – as well as more traditional public safety interventions. Special emphasis must be placed on how this impacts those in the reentry process and our youth, particularly black and brown boys, often the most at-risk in our communities.

It also means having regularly occurring, critical program review for all recipients of public funds targeted to this work. Most importantly, it means making that information as easily understandable and accessible as possible. Transparency, accountability, and direct communication with the public are as critical to violence prevention as any program model or practitioner.

I look forward to hearing your feedback on this important issue. Reach out to us at info@davidhalbert.com.

Thank you.

- David