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August 5, 2021

The Honorable Governor Daniel McKee
Office of the Governor
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Deploying the Rhode Island State Police to Assist Providence

Dear Governor McKee:

I'm writing to you under deeply upsetting circumstances. As you know, the headlines regarding crime in the city of Providence over the last few weeks have been shocking—murders, drive-by shootings, stabbings, gang incidents, and roving throngs of ATV and dirt bike riders terrorizing our neighborhoods. Just last weekend, a 24-year-old woman was killed at random in a drive-by shooting. And on Tuesday, another young woman was pulled from her vehicle and assaulted by a mob of ATV and dirt bikers.

This wave of violent crime is unacceptable, and we need to act immediately to restore public safety and make our city's residents once again feel safe walking and sitting outside in their own neighborhoods. Like the rest of Rhode Island, the capital city re-opened in recent months as the pandemic improved, and residents and visitors alike have resumed dining out, listening to live music, and patronizing our small businesses. The rampant violence we are experiencing threatens all of that; we need to ensure that Providence is welcoming and inviting for everyone who lives and visits here.

The Providence Police Department is doing everything it can to respond to this violent crime wave, and I have full faith in Police Chief Hugh Clements and the men and women of the force. Unfortunately, our police department is stretched thin, with only 400 police officers, down from the approximately 500 officers we had during the period Providence successfully implemented community policing—one of the main drivers behind the decline in violent crime in the city during the 2000s.

The City Council is working to restore the Providence Police Department back to 500 full-time officers, including funding for a new Police Academy which we approved in our FY 2022 budget. However, these efforts will take time to return the force to the level it should be, and Providence needs help now.

Governor, you have been kind enough to offer the help and support of the State to the people of Providence, to complement our police force with members of the Rhode Island State Police. Based on the recurring and heightening violent attacks in our city, I am respectfully requesting that the State Police be deployed in the appropriate fashion, in coordination with Providence Police Chief Hugh Clements, to help quell this surge in violence, and rebuild the public's confidence in the safety of our city.

Please let me know the next steps to begin the process of working collaboratively with the State Police to make our city and our neighborhoods safe again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John J. Iglizzi".

John J. Iglizzi
Council President