

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and esteemed member of the House Committee on the judiciary. I am Disabled Chicago Police Officer Carlos Yanez Jr., star#16022. Thank you for this opportunity to heard and address this very important forum, that hopefully brings light to the failings of some of our leadership and our elected officials, that have created so many “Victims of Violent Crimes in Chicago”. We all have seen the tragedies resulting from the violent crime wave that has swept through Chicago, and the victims who have to live with the pain of it every day.

including myself.

I am blessed to be speaking before you all today after what happened to my partners and I on the night of Aug 7,2021. While conducting a traffic stop, a repeat offender fired upon us with a firearm acquired by a straw purchaser, without remorse or hesitation. (A straw purchaser is somebody who purchases a firearm for someone else who is prohibited by law from possessing one). Killing one of Chicago’s Finest police officers, my partner and my friend, Ella Grace French. I was shot a total of 5X’s, four of which were in the head. I lost my right eye some hearing in both of my ears. I also have tinnitus in my right ear as well as partially paralyzed on my left side of my body. I almost didn’t survive my injuries.

It was my dream to become a Chicago Police Officer for as long as I can remember. Then in Aug of 2014, my calling became a reality, I started the Chicago Police Academy. I was then assigned to 007th District also known as Englewood, where I spent most of my career. I had the honor of learning and working among some of the greatest officers and supervisors who became family. To see their commitment to serve their community and respond to a dangerous situation without hesitation every day, gave me even more pride to wear the badge.

Under Mayor Lightfoot’s’ administration the Department disbanded the Gang/Gun and saturations teams and combined them into what is now known at Community Safety Team, created to protect residents from escalating violence due to the riots of 2020. But with all the policies/procedures put into place officers find themselves with their hands tied behind their back. Being an officer is stressful enough but now it seems like there is a witch hunt after our officers unnecessarily.

Even after Ella Grace French’s passing COPA disciplined her for a search warrant that the only thing she was seen doing on her body camera was assisting a woman. This made me sick to my stomach. COPA continues to serve suspension days to officers like candy on Halloween.

Cook County has its own issues under Kim Foxx's administration. I've never heard of so many states attorneys resigning or transferring to other County's, refusing to no longer work under her. Cook County has become a revolving door. Officers continue to lock up violent offenders but then we find them back on the street committing even more violent crimes, including murder. I just hope we elect someone that is going to demand accountability this next term. I understand this position is not easy but we have criminals fleeing suburban police departments and questioning if they are in Cook County because they know there will be less repercussions for their actions in Cook County vs surrounding counties.

Let me give you an example: several offenders in possession of a stolen vehicle and firearms committing numerous armed robberies throughout the city and someone is shot or worse killed. Only the person who pulled the trigger is charged with first degree murder the others will not. Even though in the act of committing a forceable felony someone was killed. It used to be all parties involved would be charged with the highest charge possible.

As for making stricter gun laws, we in Illinois already have one of the strictest gun laws, that only law-abiding citizens follow. The more laws you put into place is only going to increase the price of firearms on the street that straw purchasers are selling. I say we enforce the laws we already have on individuals that are in possession of a firearm and make it a minimum 3 years in jail automatically. Straw purchasers should be charged the same as the offender who pulled the trigger. It's time to stop coddling criminals and holding them accountable for their actions, only then they will they stop and think before they carjack, rob, shoot or kill a law-abiding citizen.

Certainly, we have many other issues contributing to so many Victims of Violent crime in Chicago.

I pray that this Committee and everyone listening hears this testimony I have given to you today, and takes the proper actions needed to address these issues. Thank you, members of the House Committee on judiciary, for allowing me to present my testimony and give you the perspective as a Chicago Police Officer and as a Victim of Violent Crime. God Bless all the officers doing their job and be safe.

I'll be happy to take any questions you might have.